

Sight and Sound

26
PAGES OF
REVIEWS



Robert Redford's 'Quiz Show':
revealing corruption

Re-release: Peckinpah's
'Straw Dogs' and the
shock of the old

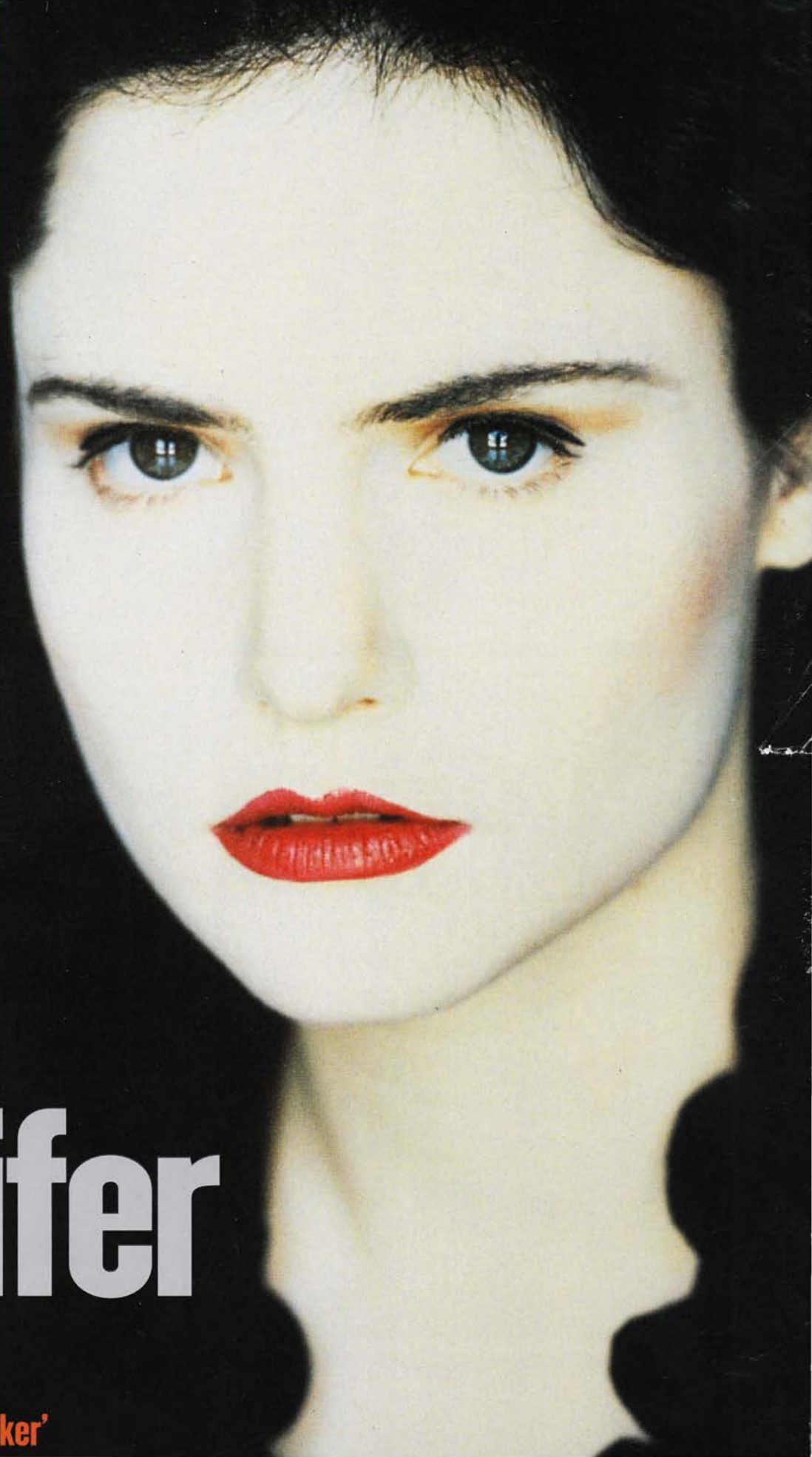
Peter Sellers' obsession:
'The Producers'

'Bandit Queen':
the director in interview

Paul Gilroy lambasts

'Terror dome'

Lizzie Borden celebrates
'Raging Bull'



Looking for
Jennifer
Jason Leigh

'Single White Female' to 'Mrs Parker'

FAUST

A unique and astounding film from the Czech surrealist
Jan Svankmajer



"Brilliant, macabre, poetic and witty. In a word, magic" *Time Out*
 "One of the greatest animators of the twentieth century" *The Independent*
 "A tour de force" *Empire*
 "One of the world's most extraordinary film-makers" *No.1 Critics' Choice - Time Out*
 (Official Selection, Cannes 1994)

SRP: £13.99

AVAILABLE AT VIRGIN, HMV, WH SMITH, OUR PRICE, SAM GOODY, TOWER RECORDS, ICA BOOKSHOP AND ALL GOOD VIDEO SHOPS



MARKETED & DISTRIBUTED BY MANGA ENTERTAINMENT LTD

Photography: ANTHONY OLIVER

COUNTDOWN TO CINEMA PRE-CINEMA AND THE BEGINNINGS OF FILM

A ten day course on the history and
development of pre-cinema artefacts
and early film technology
September 11-22 1995

SEMINARS

- Theories of motion perception
- Peepshows and Panoramas
- The Diorama
- The Art of Projection
- The Phantasmagoria
- Mechanisms of Early Cinematography
- Bioscope Shows

WORKSHOPS

- Present a dissolving view on a bi-unial lantern
- Produce a Kinemacolor film on an original camera
- Operate a 100-year-old cine projector
- Identification, conservation and restoration

Specialists from Europe and the UK will present new research in the field. Speakers will include Prof. Richard Gregory (University of Bristol), Brian Coe (MOMI),

Luke McKernan (NFTVA), Frank Gray (University of Brighton), and David Robinson

WEEK ONE

September 11-15
Pre-Cinema

WEEK TWO

September 18-22
Beginnings of film

Each week may be booked separately. Places are limited to 20 participants each week

For further information, registration forms and details of fees, please write to: Stephen Herbert, Museum of the Moving Image, South Bank, London SE1 8XT Telephone 0171 928 3535



bfi on the South Bank

Sight and Sound
(incorporating Monthly
Film Bulletin)
Volume 5 Issue 2 (NS)
21 Stephen Street
London W1P 1PL
Telephone 071 255 1444
Facsimile 071 436 2327

Editorial
Editor
Philip Dodd
Acting deputy editor
Nick James
Associate editor
Ian Christie
Acting associate editor
Leslie Felperin
Assistant editor
Rebecca Russell
Acting editorial assistant
Imogen Tilden
Editorial assistant
Colette O'Reilly
Contributing editors
J. Hoberman, Pervaiz Khan,
John Powers, Mike O'Pray, Tony
Rayns, Jane Root, Amy Taubin
Sub-editor
Mark Sinker
Picture editor
Millie Simpson
Design and art direction
Esterson Lackersteen
Page make-up
Spy Graphics
Origination
Precise Litho
Printer
St Ives plc

Advertising sales
Caroline Moore
Telephone 071 957 8912
Facsimile 071 436 2327

Business
Publishing director
Caroline Moore
Assistant
Charlotte Housden
Managing director
BFI publishing
Colin MacCabe
Newsstand distribution
UMD, Telephone 071 638 4666
Bookshop distribution
Central Books
Telephone 081 986 4854
US distribution
2nd class postage paid at
Rahway, NJ, and at additional
mailing offices. Postmaster:
send address corrections to
Sight and Sound, c/o Mercury
Airfreight International Ltd Inc.,
2323 Randolph Avenue,
Avenel, NJ 07001
Subscription price is \$63.00
Newsstand distribution by:
Eastern News Distributors Inc.

Annual subscription rates
UK £29.50
Europe £36.00
US/Canada airspeed £36.00
Overseas surface mail £36.00
Overseas airmail £61.00
Special rates apply to BFI
members
For subscription queries, back
issues and binders, contact:
Subscription Department,
Sight and Sound
Tower House, Sovereign Park
Market Harborough
Leicestershire LE16 9EF
Telephone 0858 468888
Facsimile 0858 434958
Binders: UK £7.00, overseas surface
mail £9.00

The British Film Institute exists
to encourage the development
of film, television and video in the
United Kingdom, and to promote
knowledge, understanding and
enjoyment of the culture of the
moving image. Its activities
include the National Film and
Television Archive; the National
Film Theatre; the Museum of the
Moving Image; the London Film
Festival; the production and
distribution of film and video;
funding and support for regional
activities; Library and Information
Services; Stills, Posters and
Designs; Research; Publishing
and Education; and the monthly
Sight and Sound magazine

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE
bfi
SIGHT AND SOUND MAGAZINE
Published monthly by the
British Film Institute
ISSN 0037-4806

Sight and Sound

February 1995

JEFF SLATER COLLECTION



'Straw Dogs' - Susan George: 20



'Suture' - Dennis Haysbert: 32



'Dallas Doll' - Sandra Bernhard: 43

Features

ALL ABOUT LEIGH

What distinguishes a Jennifer Jason Leigh performance, from *The Hitcher* to *Mrs. Parker?*
By Lizzie Francke **8**

SCANDAL AND THE WASP

A major 50s TV scandal is at the heart of Redford's *Quiz Show*, pitting the WASP against the Jewish outsider. By David Marc **10**

WOMAN ON THE EDGE

Banned in India, the controversial *Bandit Queen* marks a break with Indian cinema tradition. The director Shekhar Kapur talks to Udayan Prasad **14**

UNWELCOME

Welcome II the Terrordome is the first black British independent film, but its failings should not be excused, argues Paul Gilroy **18**

STRAW DOGS

With the re-release of *Straw Dogs*, David Weddle talks to those who made this controversial film, including the actress Susan George. Plus Linda Ruth Williams reflecting on feminism, femininity and the perverse **20**

EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED

Zagreb videomakers Breda Beban and Hrvoje Horvatic compare images from the classics and their own work. Chris Darke introduces them **28**

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Mistaken identity and two brothers, one black and one white, are the basis for the thriller *Suture*. The film-makers talk with Jonathan Romney **32**

Regulars

EDITORIAL History Nasties **3**

BUSINESS Beineix and his money; Oliver Stone and Richard Nixon; the Spaghetti Western is back **4**

BOOKS Women screenwriters; John Gregory Dunne; film archives; Orson Welles **36**

OBSESSION Peter Lydon on Peter Sellers and *The Producers* **39**

LETTERS Scary covers; Lena Horne; Goethe **64**

COVER Photograph by Brad Fierce/Snap-photo/Katz

Film reviews

Bandit Queen **40**
Barcelona **41**
Black Beauty **42**
Clean, Shaven **42**
Dallas Doll **43**

George Balanchine's
The Nutcracker **44**
Heavenly Creatures **45**

Interview with the Vampire:
The Vampire Chronicles **46**

Leon **47**

Only You **48**

The Pagemaster **49**

The Road to Wellville **50**

Rough Diamonds **51**

The Shawshank Redemption **52**

Solitaire For Two **53**

Stargate **53**

Suture **54**

Totally F***ed Up **55**

Welcome II the Terrordome **56**

British independents

Boy Meets Girl **57**

Video reviews

Mark Kermode and Peter Dean
on this month's video releases **58**

PRIVATE VIEW Lizzie Borden on
Scorsese's *Raging Bull* **61**

WIND UP Mark Kermode on Quentin
Tarantino's soundtracks **62**

**Next issue on
sale 21 February**




Ralph Fiennes in 'Quiz Show': 10

USA

From the director of *Trouble in Mind* and *Choose Me*
Alan Rudolph's
Equinox
 Starring
 Matthew Modine
 Lara Flynn Boyle
 Marisa Tomei
 Henry Ward

1992 John Cassavetes Award for
 Major Achievement in Filmmaking

TARTAN VIDEO



"The kind of magic only the best cinema can provide"
 THE TIMES

15

EQUINOX

From Alan Rudolph, the director of *Trouble in Mind*, *Choose Me* and *Mrs Parker and the Vicious Circle*.

"The kind of magic only the best cinema can provide"

THE TIMES

CAT No: TVT 1175
 £15.99

A SHORT FILM ABOUT LOVE

Krzysztof Kieslowski's acclaimed feature-length version of one of the episodes of *Dekalog*, the cycle of films based on the Ten Commandments.

"Fascinating... discreetly erotic... resembles *Rear Window*"

THE OBSERVER


CAT No: TVT 1092
 £15.99

Poland

From the director of *A Short Film About Killing* and *Three Colours: Red*
 Kenneth Rice presents
Krzysztof Kieslowski's
A Short Film About Love
 Starring
 Grazyna Szapolowska
 Olaf Lubaszenko
 Stefania Iwinska

Winner Grand Prix, Gdansk Film Festival 1988
 Fipresci Prize at IFCI
 San Sebastian Film Festival 1988

TARTAN VIDEO




"Fascinating... discreetly erotic... resembles 'Rear Window'."
 THE OBSERVER

18

Estonia

In the tradition of the classic *Rififi*
Ilkka Järvelä's
Darkness in Tallinn
 Starring
 Ivo Ukkivi
 Milena Gulbe
 Juri Jarvet

TARTAN VIDEO



"A true B-movie gem"
 THE GUARDIAN

18

DARKNESS IN TALLINN

In the tradition of the classic *Rififi* and Quentin Tarantino's current Pick of the Month.

"A true B-movie gem"

THE GUARDIAN

CAT No: TVT 1196
 £15.99

A SHORT FILM ABOUT KILLING

The successor to *A Short Film About Love* from Krzysztof Kieslowski, the director of *Three Colours, Red*.

"An edgy, raw and challenging film of the very highest order"

TIME OUT


CAT No: TVT 1091
 £15.99

Poland

From the director of *Three Colours: Red* and *A Short Film About Love*
 Kenneth Rice presents
Krzysztof Kieslowski's
A Short Film About Killing
 Starring
 Mirosław Baka
 Krzysztof Globisz

Winner Prix du Jury II International Critics Prize, Cannes Film Festival 1988
 Winner Best Film, 1988 European Film Awards, Berlin 1988

TARTAN VIDEO



"An edgy, raw and challenging film of the very highest order."
 TIME OUT

18

ORDER FORM

SPECIAL OFFER

EXCLUSIVE MERCHANDISING

To order simply complete the form below. Make cheques and P.O.'s payable to TARTAN VIDEO LTD., allowing for p&p (see below). Total order value £_____. I enclose a cheque for the total made payable to Tartan Video Limited, or charge my credit card for the total value of

£_____ ☐ VISA ☐ ACCESS (please tick)

Cat. No: _____ Title _____

Cat. No: _____ Title _____

Cat. No: _____ Title _____

Card Number _____ Expiry Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Please cut (or photocopy) the form and return to: TARTAN VIDEO LTD., METRO TARTAN HOUSE, 79 WARDOUR ST., LONDON W1V 3TH. Tel. No. 071 494 1400

Please allow 28 days for delivery. *Special offer is valid until 28th February 1995.

CREDIT CARD HOTLINE!

Simply call the Sight and Sound + Tartan Video Offer hotline on 071 437 5695 to order your choices instantly (all major credit cards accepted)

P&P RATES: 3 ITEMS OR LESS: UK £2.50 EUROPE £4.00 WORLDWIDE £9.00. 5 ITEMS OR MORE: P&P FREE

ALL TITLES ARE ALSO AVAILABLE FROM HMV, VIRGIN, OUR PRICE, TOWER, WH SMITH AND ALL GOOD VIDEO RETAIL OUTLETS

From the director of *Blue Velvet* and *Blue Rhythm*
Hal Hartley's
Trust
 Starring
 Anthony Heald
 Marisa Tomei
 Martin Donovon

TARTAN VIDEO



"A bizarre, hysterical and totally unique movie" vox

18

TRUST

With the recent release of Hal Hartley's *Amateur*, a chance to own one of his earlier classics, a beautifully written comedy about suburban middle America in the tradition of *Blue Velvet*.

"A bizarre, hysterical and totally unique movie" vox

Normally priced at 15.99 but available to Sight & Sound readers for the special offer price of just
£10.99 CAT No: TVT 035 S

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF *THE KILLER AND HARD TARGET*
 "More exciting than a dozen *Die Hards*"
 "John Woo is God!"
 "Probably the most violent, gun-crazy, action flick you will ever see"
 "Got-smacking mayhem"
 "John Woo is to action what Hitchcock is to suspense"



BOILED

HARD BOILED POSTER

As a reader of Sight and Sound, you can buy the poster for this

high-octane John Woo masterpiece at the special offer price of just **£5.00** (incl. p&p).

CAT No: TVT 8176

History nasties

Contributors to this issue

Lizzie Borden's films include *Working Girls* and, most recently, *Let's Talk About Love*, part of a portmanteau film, *Erotique*. **Lenny Borger** is a Paris-based critic and subtitler. **Chris Darke** is a freelance writer and works with Film and Video Umbrella. **Haddani Ditmars** is a freelance London- and Paris-based writer. **Lizzie Francke** is the author of a study of women screenwriters, reviewed in this issue. **Paul Gilroy's** latest book is *The Black Atlantic*, a study of modernity and the black experience. **Larry Gross's** most recent screen credit is for Walter Hill's *Geronimo*. **David Marc** teaches at University of California, Berkeley and is the author of the forthcoming *Bonfire of the Humanities*. **Udayan Prasad** is a filmmaker whose next project for the BBC is *Brothers in Trouble*. **Jonathan Romney** is deputy film critic at *The Guardian*. **Robin Swicord** is the screenwriter for Gillian Armstrong's *Little Women*. **David Weddle** is the author of the recently published biography of Sam Peckinpah, *If They Move... Kill 'Em*. **Linda Ruth Williams** teaches at University of Southampton and is the author of the forthcoming *Critical Desire*.

In the mid nineteenth century, Charles Dickens' public readings from his own novels were justly famous – none more so than his rendition of the murder of Nancy at the hands of Bill Sykes in *Oliver Twist*, which lingered on the blood-splattered weapon to which strands of Nancy's hair still clung. So powerful was Dickens' performance that members of his audience regularly fainted and had to be carried out, and such was his popularity as a novelist that he became a target for the moralisers of the day, the art critic John Ruskin denouncing *Bleak House* for the number of deaths it flaunted and for its effect on readers. Now, 100 years later, Dickens is celebrated on BBC 2 – in the splendid *Martin Chuzzlewit* – as part of the national heritage.

This is just the sort of anecdote likely to make complacent those of us who are sceptical of the present pro-censorship climate. "Look, they panicked over Dickens; they're just doing the same over Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers*." (Incidentally, this last has finally been given a release date, 24 February.) It is also the kind of anecdote that makes it appear as if 'violent, bloody art' is always at the cutting edge. But is it?

Clearly there is a lot of it about. On release at the moment (or about to be released) are the Stone, the Quentin Tarantino-produced *Killing Zoe* and Danny Boyle's *Shallow Grave*, to name the most high-profile. All are concerned with the violence and the body, its needs, fears, desires – and with what can be done to it. These concerns also drive much contemporary art: fashionable galleries sometimes seem to be full of eviscerated bodies or heads sculpted from blood. Even natural history programmes have been infected. The current series of David Attenborough's *The Private Lives of Plants* has sequences of plants unfurling that would be inconceivable without the influence of such 80s horror films as *Alien*.

Of course there are possible explanations for these obsessions. Some would point to the influence of Foucault and the central role in politics he ascribes to the body; others might point to the way concerns with the body and violence seem always

to erupt during a *fin de siècle* – the obsession with the vampire in the late nineteenth century, for example. It is not wholly to gainsay the value of such explanations to argue that 'violence and the body' are also how a film (or a work of art) today signals that it is 'serious'. 20 or 30 years ago, transgression was announced through sex; now it's through violence.

This need not mean that most of the films have to be taken with the seriousness they take themselves – nor should we forget to question the misogyny fuelling some of them. But it does leave unanswered which popular films (other than 'violent' ones) are worth seeing at present?

Of course, the other kind of popular movie making at the moment is the costume film – of which the Merchant Ivory approach is far from being the only one. There is certainly potential in the costume film: first, it allows women centre-stage, hardly something that distinguishes many 'violent' movies with a contemporary setting; second, this kind of film allows cinema once more to engage with larger historical matters. In this regard it's interesting that Merchant/Ivory's forthcoming film is *Jefferson in Paris*, a study of the American President's Thomas Jefferson's intimate relationship with a slave.

One film on release at present, Patrice Chéreau's *La Reine Margot*, is an interesting if only fitfully successful hybrid of the costume drama and the contemporary violent thriller. Telling its story around the events of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre – when thousands of Protestants were slaughtered by French Catholics in the sixteenth century – it cunningly mixes elements of Jacobean tragedy with cinematic elements from *The Godfather*.

What *La Reine Margot* suggests is that it may be possible to fuse these two film idioms, the costume drama and the revenge thriller, and use such a hybrid to address the whole European nightmare of ethnic cleansing.

We shall return to Chéreau's film when the magazine looks at the resurgence of Dumas-based film later in the year; it's one of them.

JERRY ON LINE #1

Peter Lydon – James Sillavan ©



'This is going to be my year Jerry I can feel it! The low budget film that breaks out, the star vehicle that cleans up, some grudging affection from the critics, the odd Oscar. Of course if it turns out like the last year we'll simply put it down as one of yours, OK?'

The business

● International co-productions are tricky things these days, involving intricate and usually protracted financial manoeuvres before the first foot of film is exposed. This generally means a producer putting together a project, finding what money he or she can from private and government sources, and then pre-selling the film to a number of foreign distributors.

The latter, attracted by cast, director and/or script, commit to pay a certain amount in return for the right to distribute the film in their own country. The producer then takes that commitment to his bank, who advance money against it, helping itself to a fair whack in the process. After all, as one (Dutch) banker pithily explained to Mr Busy recently, "we are not in the business of making films, we are in the business of making money."

By and large, though, the process works. The producer survives by writing in a more or less fat fee, films get made and no one gets rich apart from the banks. God is in his counting house, in other words, and all's well with the world.

That is how it is supposed to happen, anyway. When things go wrong, they do so spectacularly, which is what appears to have happened with a film called *Mesmer*, which was shot over a nine-week period between September and November last year in Vienna and Budapest, with studio work done at Babelsberg in Potsdam. The initiating producer was Lance Reynolds, a dynamic chap who had previously put together the movie version of Steven Berkoff's play *Decadence*, in which Berkoff co-starred with Joan Collins.

Mesmer, as its name implies, is about one Mesmer, physician and inventor of mesmerism, who lived and – as people tend to in such biopics – loved his way round Europe in the eighteenth century. Dennis Potter had written the screenplay, Alan Rickman played the title role, David Bowie was credited as executive producer (which means he probably put up some of the money) and Roger Spottiswoode directed.

Expected to be selected for Cannes last year, *Mesmer* wasn't. It finally premiered in competition in Montreal at the end of August, where Leonard Klady in *Variety* (the only review I have been able to find) described it as "a viewing challenge akin to an obstacle course".

The challenge was apparently too much for Roger Wingate of London's Mayfair Entertainment, which (along with Canada's Cineplex Odeon) was one of *Mesmer*'s two main pre-buyers. In a move almost unprecedented for a film of this stature, Mayfair reportedly declined to take delivery of the film, on the grounds that it was completely different from the screenplay to which they had committed. This move not



Ancien regime meets New Age: Alan Rickman, as the eponymous hypnotist in Roger Spottiswoode's 'Mesmer'

only means oblivion for the film in the UK: it also spells financial disaster for Lance Reynolds.

M'learned friends advise against further comment at this stage. But Mr Busy would like to point out that, a decade or so ago, he interviewed a certain Clay Frohman, who wrote the original screenplay for *Under Fire* and who was less than happy with the way in which the director (a certain Spottiswoode) had changed it. And readers of this column with a long memory may recall an account of the same director's problems with the HBO telefilm, *And the Band Played On* (S&S, September 1993).

I am tempted to say that the ever fascinating and endlessly energetic intercourse between art and money appears to be the theme of this month's column. But then I realised that it has been the theme of every month's column.

Be that as it may, it is good to know that those film-makers noted for their undying commitment to a personal artistic vision do not, for all that, lose sight of the readies.

Take Jean-Jacques Beineix, whose recent personal visions – notably *Roselyne et les lions* and *'IP5'* – have sailed somewhat to the south of international financial favour. Since he has from the very start been his own producer, such setbacks are likely to have affected him more keenly than mere critical snottiness.

Beineix has been busy with documentaries for French TV of late, as well as taking over the presidency of the French directors' and producers' association (ARP) from Claude Berri. But he has also been busy maximising a few of his existing assets. In between releasing the 'integral' (i.e. much longer) version of *'Betty Blue'* and flogging the North American remake rights for *'Diva'* to Diana

Ross, Beineix has been energetically promoting the idea of a slightly recut *'Roselyne'* as a great idea for a children's film.

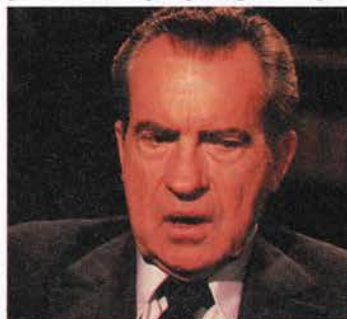
Running into the shaven-headed maestro recently in an unlikely corner of Europe, Mr Busy asked him for the rationale behind all this activity, and particularly what led him to release a longer version of the already lengthy 'Betty Blue'.

Beineix smiled happily. "More sex," he said, "more violence and more money."

Not since Pauline Kael spotted the infamous 'Kiss Kiss Bang Bang' poster have I come across a pithier summation of contemporary cinema.

● Speaking of violence, Juan Rattagan of E17 (the postal district, not the pop group), who wrote in to say how glad he was that Oliver Stone would not be bringing his particular talents to bear on Andrew Lloyd Webber's "inaccurate play" *Evita*, may be interested to know that Stone (whose *Natural Born Killers* will finally be released in the UK later this month) is turning his attention to the life of Richard Nixon instead.

The project is not yet definite, but would presumably be a companion piece to Stone's *JFK*, perhaps tracing



Not a crook: Oliver Stone on Richard Nixon

all the familiar old conspiracy theories back to their source (Mr Busy is only sorry that Ollie appears to be leaving out a life of LBJ, especially if the notorious Yippie description of what happened on Air Force One on the way back to Washington from Dallas has an ounce of truth in it).

Mr Rattagan should not breathe too big a sigh of relief, however. The *Evita* movie project is still very much alive. And the new director is Alan Parker.

The film based on video game 'Double Dragon' opened in the States last autumn, the movie based on 'Streetfighter' was released just before Christmas and 'Mortal Kombat' is due this summer. The prestigious Samuel Goldwyn Company, meanwhile, whose normal film production activities run to such upmarket fare as 'Longtime Companion' and 'Oleanna', is setting up a big-screen version of one of its TV division's most successful franchises.

It remains to be seen how you transform a bunch of well-developed performers in discreetly bulging costumes climbing up pyramids and swinging on ropes into a two-hour story. But I guess if they could do it with *'Super Mario Bros.'*, they can do it with *'Gladiators'*. Come to think of it, wasn't one of the problems that they couldn't do it with *'Super Mario Bros.'*?

● Last summer, Mr Busy reported a crack in the facade of that monolith of cinematic cultural promotion, Scandinavian Films. For those unfamiliar with the European festival circuit, Scandinavian Films is the umbrella organisation which promotes (and, in most cases, sells) films from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. It is best known in Cannes for its nifty little shoulder bags and its overcrowded

but undeniably bucolic party.

Purists have long been saying that Finland and Iceland are Nordic rather than Scandinavian countries, so the name should be changed (which, in the case of the Nordic Film and Television Fund, it has been).

Besides, inhabitants from any of the aforementioned countries are not noted for their ability to get on with inhabitants from any of the others (they have Swedish jokes in Denmark, Norwegian jokes in Sweden, and so on, more or less exponentially).

At Cannes in 1994, the Finns, accompanied by Aki Kaurismäki's unforgettable *Leningrad Cowboys*, set up separate shop in a local bar, but the five countries will be back together this month in Berlin. It looks like being the last time, however. This time, the bust-up is neither cultural nor character-based but, reportedly, financial.

The funding for Scandinavian Films is worked out on the basis of each country's Gross National Product, which means that the Swedes end up paying most of it, while ironically getting far fewer of their films into the various festival selections than the Finns, the Danes, the Norwegians and even the Icelanders.

With Sweden no longer experiencing its 30-year economic



Lee Tamahori's 'Once Were Warriors'

boom and with the Swedish Film Institute particularly short of funds, helping Nordic neighbours is apparently not as high on the agenda as it used to be.

The final instalment of S&S's 'Chronicle of Cinema' indicated that, in box-office terms, dinosaurs rule the earth, with 'Jurassic Park' the most successful film of all time in almost every country.

There are, however, a few exceptions. And New Zealand is the latest addition to the list. Shortly before Christmas, the locally-made 'Once Were Warriors' overtook Spielberg's ponderous prehistoric epic to become the top-grossing film of all time in New Zealand.

This is all the more remarkable given that the film, based on a successful local

novel, is not your usual box-office winner but rather a disturbing and brutal study of dysfunction and domestic violence in a working class Maori family.

Passed over for selection at Cannes – a decision which puzzled many of those who saw it in the market there – 'Warriors' has gone on to pick up a number of awards at other festivals and has been acquired for distribution more or less everywhere in the world (Entertainment will open it in the UK some time this year).

After over a decade as a first assistant and maker of commercials, director Lee Tamahori, whose debut feature it was, has since been signed by MGM to make the period crime thriller 'Mulholland Falls' starring Nick Nolte, which starts production in March.

● Connoisseurs of the spaghetti western – and, by Lee Van Cleef, there are not many of us left – will be pleased to know that the laconic, indestructible Trinity has saddled up for one more ride.

E lo chiameranno sempre Trinità started production in Italy on October 10, with the series' regular director, the veteran E. B. Clucher (real name: Enzo Barboni), behind the camera. As far as Mr Busy has been able to ascertain (and I feel sure there are readers out there all set to correct him), this will be the character's first outing since 1972.

Sadly, however, the original Trinity team – Terence Hill and Bud Spencer

(aka Mario Girotti and Carlo Pedersoli) – are not involved. As already reported here, these two have been making a film called *The Fight Before Christmas* in the US. For the new film, they have been replaced by a pair of actors with the intriguing transatlantic pseudonyms of Keith Kizier and Keith Neubert.

Method actors beware: Jennifer Jason Leigh, who plays the title role in Alan Rudolph's 1994 Cannes competition entry, 'Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle', did such a good job mimicking the not-so-divine Dorothy's clipped tones that typical American audiences have been unable to understand her.

These are, presumably, the same discerning moviegoers that wouldn't have gone to see a Robert Altman film called 'Pre-a-portal' until Miramax retitled it 'Ready to Wear'. And they bear no relationship at all to those of us over here who, over the years, have strained and struggled to pick up the nuances of Valleyspeak or to understand more than one word in ten pronounced by Marlon Brando in 'Reflections in a Golden Eye'.

No, when the Great American Audience goes 'Hunnh?' distributors listen. So North American distributor Fine Line has had about 40 of the most extreme examples of Leigh's Parkerspeak relooped.

"An actor can't win with an accent," commented Rudolph to the 'Los Angeles Times'. "If Jennifer had just done a flat voice, guess what criticism we would hear."

PARIS NOTES

The Algerian connection

A few hundred metres away from the set of *Panne de sens*, director Malik Chibane's film about second-generation Algerian youth in the suburbs of Paris, children are playing a game of terrorists and commandos. In this latest version of cops and robbers, it is unclear who are the 'good guys' and who are the 'bad'. The important thing seems to be who wins – and how 'cool' their uniforms are.

But in France, for young *beurs*, the group perhaps most acutely affected by the French/Algerian drama, the situation is increasingly a no-win one, no matter which side they choose.

Caught between the country of their birth and the land of their ancestors, *beurs* have seen their identity crisis further heightened by recent events. With French media jumping on the neo-colonial revenge bandwagon, TV newscasts praising the professionalism of the GIGN and right-wing tabloids full of photos of armed commandos storming the plane Rambo-style in Marseilles, *Panne de sens* offers the relief of a more human perspective. And by examining the dilemmas of second generation Algerians, Chibane, a *beur* himself, offers insight into the troubled relationship between France and her ex-colony.

At a time when France and Algeria are increasingly polarised, though still

intrinsically linked, the *banlieue parisien* has become a microcosm of current tension. And with Algiers now a cinematic no-mans-land, the *banlieue* has also become the focus for Franco-Algerian film-makers. Even Merzak Allouache, unable to work in Algeria since the production of *Bab El-Oued City*, is preparing the screenplay for a new film, a suburban love story about a young *beur* and a Senegalese immigrant.

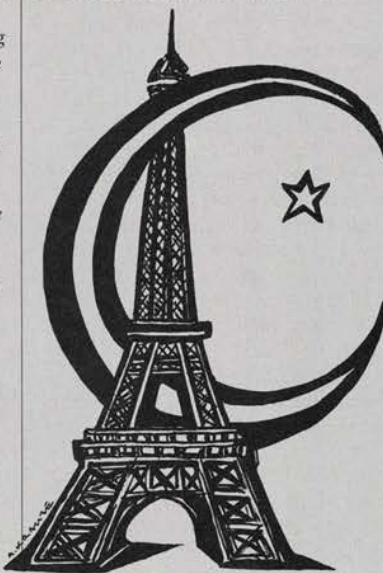
Panne de sens, a play on words meaning both "out of petrol" and "it doesn't make sense", tells of two *beur* sisters living in Aubervilliers, a suburb of Paris. One rejects her Algerian heritage, embracing everything French. The other embraces the fundamentalist Islam which is rapidly gaining popularity in the *banlieue* (largely as an affirmation of Algerian identity and a defence against racism).

Mirroring the migratory trend which has brought many Algerian artists and intellectuals to Paris, actors from *Bab El-Oued City*, unable to work at home, have resurfaced in *Panne de sens*. But the journey from Bab El-Oued to Aubervilliers, it seems, is not that far.

Mohamed Ourdache, who played the young Islamist gang leader in Allouache's film, is transformed into a suburban Imam. Ourdache, who was raised in a suburb of Algiers, finds

many similarities in Aubervilliers. He sees the same situation unfolding in both milieus: unemployed young men caught between two cultural identities are seduced by an Islamist doctrine which often uses social issues as a starting point for religious rhetoric.

In *Panne de sens*, Nadia Kaci, who played the beautiful girl frustrated with her cloistered existence in *Bab El-Oued*



City, now plays the role of an Algerian girl who becomes disillusioned with life in a Paris suburb. Her character's *voyage du soi* serves as an interesting metaphor for the Algerian 'regard' towards France.

She comes to Paris believing that she is to be engaged to a young *beur*. Initially happy to be away from the crisis in Algeria, she soon discovers that the 'love letters' that she received from her 'fiancé' were in fact written by his mother, who hoped to marry him off to a 'traditional' Algerian girl. He is actually in love with someone else, and Kaci's character, thinking she has left Islamic extremism behind her, is alarmed at the rise in *banlieue* fundamentalism.

In the end, puzzled by a society that asserts its freedom and identity through the very religious fundamentalism that she is oppressed by in Algeria, she decides to return home. All is betrayal, confused identity, shattered illusions.

Meanwhile, the children playing terrorists and commandos ignore the *tourage* and continue their game. Nearby, their parents sit inside cramped apartments watching Algerian soap operas beamed in via satellite, while thousands of miles away, the roofs of Bab El-Oued receive the latest transmissions from Canal Plus. Haddani Ditmars

When Jurassic Park explodes into your living room,
it could only be Laser Disc home cinema.





Picture the scene. One minute you're settling in for a quiet evening with your latest Pioneer Laser Disc movie. The next, you're half way out of your armchair, with your pulse rate registering ten on the Richter scale, as the most ferocious predator ever known to mankind suddenly explodes into your living room.

If you're looking for the ultimate home cinema experience, no other A/V medium compares to Laser Disc.

With a picture that's 60% sharper than any other home video system, the movie world's most powerful images almost literally leap out of the screen towards you.

And with full CAV capability that includes perfect still reproduction and frame by frame advance, you can study all those wonderful special effects in minute detail - if you dare to get that close.

Your ears will appreciate the Laser Disc difference too, in the form of pure digital audio, delivered with all the clarity and dynamic sonic impact of a quality CD player - impressive performance you can start enjoying right away, using your existing Hi-Fi.

Then, if you wish, you can easily upgrade both the audio and visual capabilities of your system at any time, using our full range of custom-matched Pioneer home cinema products.

It's a range that includes six Pioneer Laser Disc players, compatible with both Laser Discs and CD's, and extends to all the essential elements you could possibly need to convert your living room into a sophisticated private cinema.

Everything from a Dolby Pro-Logic processor to a dedicated Surround Sound satellite speaker system, right up to the stunning big screen reality of a Pioneer 40 or 50 inch projection television.

As for the software that brings all this to life, you'll find that the choice gets greater every day, thanks to an ever-increasing list of software titles that covers not only the very latest smash hit movies, but also documentaries, concerts and, of course, a wide range of karaoke discs. Most Pioneer Laser Disc players also feature dual standard playback capability.

So wherever your imagination leads you, from close encounters with a hungry Tyrannosaurus to close encounters of any other kind, one thing is for sure.

Pioneer Laser Disc home cinema will take you there almost before you can say 'Jurassic Park'.



PIONEER®
The Art of Entertainment

What kind of performer is Jennifer Jason Leigh, star of 'Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle'? By Lizzie Francke

ALL ABOUT LEIGH

● Jennifer Jason Leigh says that she tries to avoid her reflection in mirrors while involved in a film role. In an industry and profession rooted in narcissism, such a desire for self-effacement suggests a very particular perception of her craft. One is reminded of her portrayal of the deranged Hedy in *Single White Female*, in which the out-of-town mousy wraith of a girl gradually assumes the sharply defined looks and life-style of the seemingly poised and fulfilled woman (played by Bridget Fonda) with whom she shares a gloomy Manhattan apartment. It's the ultimate make-over (Barbet Schroeder's film could be described as a *grand guignol* all-thrills reworking of Bergman's *Persona*). Though this cloning begins to mutate and breakdown in the most alarming manner, *Single White Female* could be a blue-print for Leigh's approach to any role: as with Hedy, so now in her latest and most significant part, playing Dorothy Parker, the doyenne of the cynical, whisky-sour one-liner, in *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle*, Alan Rudolph's homage to the Algonquin Set. As Robert Altman has commented, "Off camera, Jennifer is a ghost. The lines of her face fade, the colour disappears. It's like she's just waiting for someone to put a hat on her, to colour her face."

This is why it seems so hard to locate a stable on-screen persona for Leigh. If she surfaces as a character in one movie, it then appears to collapse and dissolve. It isn't immediately easy to connect the young waitress with the small-town blues who ends up literally being torn apart for dreaming of leaving (in Robert Harmon's 1986 road-kill movie *The Hitcher*) with Susie Wagoner, the moonlighting student who fantasises while on the game about a life of dull domesticity (in George Armitage's funky 1990 thriller *Miami Blues*). Then there is the undercover narcotics officer who ends up a junkie in *Rush* (Lili Fini Zanuck, 1991) or Tralala, the dock-side prostitute with a halo of white-blonde hair in Uli Edel's 1989 adaptation of Hubert Selby's brilliant but grim novel *Last Exit To Brooklyn*. These are some of the many hats under which Leigh has adroitly concealed herself.

That she is not very interested in herself is discernible from the interviews she has

granted, by her careful shielding of herself from the more personal questions. But neither does she seem particularly keen to talk about the nature of her occupation. More than once she has claimed she doesn't like to "cerebralise" what acting might be about, despite being a manifestly cerebral sort. "I just act," is all she usually says. But clearly there is a well-thought-out approach, as questions asked about characters played reveal her to be an obsessive researcher and observer of human behaviour. On such matters she becomes highly animated. For the psychotic Hedy, she spent months interviewing doctors and patients in mental institutions. For the house-bound phone-sex operator in Altman's *Short Cuts*, who could simulate a blow-job while nonchalantly changing her baby's nappy, she talked to workers in the booming phone-sex industry. In her need to know everything about her subjects, she reputedly goes to inquisition-lengths, detailing their lives down to the brand of toothpaste. Which is exactly the kind of scrutiny she would prefer to deflect from herself.

For Leigh is the actor-as-fastidious-biographer playing a role the way an author might offer an interpretation of a character. In the case of period films like *Last Exit to Brooklyn* and *The Hudsucker Proxy*, she becomes a study in a particular acting style. In such cases, Leigh has spent time viewing the movies of the eras in question, so that the put-upon and wasted Tralala seems to be played strutting along the waterfront imagining she is Jayne Mansfield. Leigh also brings to the role some of Marilyn Monroe's or Eve Marie Saint's tender fragility – but with any anger that was sewn up into the wounded female roles of 1950s movies here allowed to seep through at the seams. In *The Hudsucker Proxy*, the Coen Brothers' take on such 1930s and 1940s screwball comedies as *His Girl Friday*, Leigh plays Amy Archer, the nattily attired ace reporter, as a very arch if perhaps overstudied pastiche of Katherine Hepburn at her most anarchic, sounding rather like W. C. Fields on speed.

This notion of acting as annotation is most apparent in *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle*. Handed the cloche hat, Leigh set out to secure it

firmly over that sleekly bobbed head of hair: she researched Parker's life and work scrupulously. She collected photographs and tracked down the rare recordings and even a signed first edition of short stories which she kept by her bed. Her performance is a simulacrum constructed from small details out of the writer's life.

Out of the brat pack

It would seem that nothing escapes her attention. In one interview she discusses her fascination with how Parker had placed her hands in a certain portrait as if this tiny gesture frozen in monochrome provided some secret knowledge. These touchstones work in some intense and alluring way as Leigh guys her reading of the Parker persona tautly down, her body as stiff as her drinks, her slurred drawl still resonating with East Coast brittleness as she wounds all around with pithy observation. Parker is played so ensnared in her own unhappiness that she seems to move like a woman aching from the heart outwards.

A heavier, less nuanced performance might have seized on the overfamiliar tortured-writer type, the more famous one-liners could have been delivered in that here-we-go manner that dogs so many bio-pics (recall Beethoven deliberating over the opening arpeggios of the *Moonlight Sonata*). But even when Leigh is called to recite Parker's poems directly to camera, it doesn't seem like a set piece. As the film segues awkwardly back and forth from the polished but decadent 1920s through to the dingy and dark final years of Parker's life in the 1960s, it is Leigh who lends *Mrs. Parker* the coherence it would otherwise lack, by allowing her creation a full inner range. Prosthetic puffy eyes and wrinkled skin are one thing, but Leigh crumples with a sad ageing that latex could not sag to, making it hard to believe that she is only 32.

In this role, she undoubtedly demonstrates a maturity uncommon in an actor of her generation, and the era of the brat-pack who graduated through the 1980s teen-pic. Others in *Mrs. Parker* share this background: Jennifer Beals, Matthew Broderick, Andrew McCarthy, Lili Taylor and Martha Plimpton (indeed it's something of a shock that actors from such chronicles of



Metamorphosis: Jennifer Jason Leigh in George Armitage's 'Miami Blues', left, and the Coen Brothers' 'The Hudsucker Proxy', right



adolescent angst as *Flashdance*, *Pretty in Pink*, and *Mystic Pizza* are now grown-up). But Leigh was in 1982's *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, directed by Amy Heckerling, scripted by Cameron Crowe, as were Judge Reinhold, Phoebe Cates and Forest Whitaker, a fresh and frank take on the years spent hanging out between the mall and classroom, that was certainly a cut above other youth-exploitation fare of that date. As the pudgy and somewhat shy Stacy, Leigh already stood out, her performance bristling with all the awkwardness of youth. When one particular scene was dropped, in which Stacy attempts to make out with an equally inexperienced date, it is revealing that Leigh was prompted to complain about the cut to the press. The sequence had been intended to reveal the rawness but also the hilarity of first sexual encounters. Her comments to the *New York Times* suggest her already unorthodox approach even then: "I think that if it had been romantically done, and pretty to look at, like *Endless Love*, it

wouldn't have bothered people. But this was real, almost documentary."

Such is the method actor's need to pursue some moment of authenticity. Already, so early in her career, Leigh was signalling her desire to be taken exceptionally seriously. The previous year she had played an anorexic in the made-for-TV movie *The Best Little Girl in the World*, which treated the subject, at the time still somewhat taboo, in an intelligent fashion, but also remarkably intensely, to the point of being harrowing. For that role Leigh had put herself on so strict a diet that she almost wasted away, to a dangerous 98 pounds. In the same year, and with equal diligence, she learnt Braille to play a deaf and blind rape victim in a run-of-the-mill slasher movie, *Eyes of a Stranger*. Leigh would not rest even with the videostore fodder which she occasionally seemed to disappear into during the 1980s. Patently she always had much more to offer to her roles than such films allow.

She seems similarly out of time and place in

Acting from the heart outwards: Jennifer Jason Leigh as the writer Dorothy Parker in 'Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle'

contemporary Hollywood, as she has shown by thriving under such non-Hollywood directors as Altman, Rudolph and Schroeder. Despite this, she is very much a child of the industry, albeit of a particular milieu within it. Her father was the late Vic Morrow, a method actor who made his mark as a young punk in *Blackboard Jungle* but became a household name in the 60s in the TV series *Combat*, while her mother is the actor-turned-screenwriter Barbara Turner whose credits include the script for the Altman-produced *Petulia* (1968), which was Richard Lester's attempt at kooky new wave, and the canine horror movie *Cujo* (1983). Turner, who brought Leigh up after divorcing Morrow, also has a reputation for meticulous research beyond the call of duty when writing. Indeed, when Leigh was a child her mother would take her to script conferences if the story featured children, and ask her how authentic she thought the younger characters seemed. One suspects that it is this that influenced Leigh as she evolved her approach to acting, rather than her short stint at a summer school as a teenager under the tutelage of Lee Strasberg.

Only acting

As regards Leigh's ability to metamorphose at the changing of a hat, Altman has compared her talents to Meryl Streep's. If so, she is Streep's dark shadow. One suspects that, had she played such heroic types as Karen Silkwood or Sophie in *Sophie's Choice*, she would have played them fractured in some very deep sense. Certainly if one needs to typify her work, she is not shy of playing women who are in some way damaged. She has built an armour around herself in order to allow her characters to display levels of vulnerability most Hollywood actresses would shy from. In this respect one thinks not of Streep, who wears her characters, but of Gena Rowlands, and the way she turns hers inside out. Tellingly, just before the shooting of the most traumatic scene in *Last Exit*, in which Tralala empties herself of all feeling and submits to an unceremonious gang rape, Leigh prepared herself and the film crew with the announcement: "Remember, it's only acting." She was reminding everyone that rather than being exploited herself, she documents the exploited.

One wonders what remains for her to document. There is about her a profound sense of an actress moving into a crucial phase of her career, an artist willing to be pushed further. She has just finished *Georgia*, from a script by her mother, in which she plays a washed-up smalltime singer, dependent on booze and blues. Meanwhile it is significant that she cites such films as Jane Campion's *Sweetie* and Mike Leigh's *Naked* as recent favourites, and interesting to speculate how she might work with such writer-directors. And it seems no coincidence that Leigh (Mike) was in the audience when Leigh (Jennifer Jason) gave her *Guardian Lecture* in London recently. An actress who wears her hats so well – the head under them buzzing with ideas of her own – needs the very best and most imaginative of milliners.

'Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle' opens on 3 March

Greed, arrogance and ethnic conflict drive Robert Redford's 'Quiz Show', his new movie about 50s television scandals. The film is one of the few movies about television that will interest adults. By David Marc

SCANDAL AND THE WASP



● Sound rendered vaudeville obsolete in the 30s, and Hollywood made amends by lionising its dying ancestor with a seemingly endless string of sentimental backstage musicals. As television undermines cinema, Hollywood responds by demonising its bastard child, often in the broadest of terms (a *powerful tool* in the hands of evil geniuses who shamelessly manipulate a helpless public, in the sacred name of entertainment). The corporate execu-monsters of *Network* (Sidney Lumet, 1976), the irresponsible infotainment parajournalists of *The China Syndrome* (James Bridges, 1978), the technocratic brainwashing cabal of *Bob Roberts* (Tim Robbins, 1992), all are blamed for society's ills by film directors, with little regard for glass houses, stones or throwing rights.

But the anti-TV jeremiad nonetheless constitutes arguably the most consistently socially conscious of contemporary Hollywood genres, and the passion of cinema's disdain for video has sometimes raised it to an art form. With *Quiz Show* (1994), director Robert Redford presents a tale of the greed, arrogance and thoroughly amoral behaviour of the American television industry; unlike most of his predecessors, he uses a story from the history books. The result is a movie about television that's actually of interest to adults.

In the mid-50s, as American commercial television was approaching full transcontinental penetration, the "big money quiz show" was emerging as a popular and profitable prime-time programming format. In 1955 Dan Enright and his partner Jack Barry, the first a minor New York producer, the second the on-air quizmaster, hit the jackpot on CBS with *The \$64,000 Question*, a TV adaptation of an old radio game, *The \$64 Question*. (The rise in stakes was a telling reflection of the recent fortunes of the broadcasting industry.)

Money isn't everything

Many theatrical tricks were used to sell the show to the public. For example, members of contestants' families were seated in a specially lit section of the audience for maximum impact close-up reaction shots, while an impressive high-tech IBM computer was used to produce the questions on punch-cards, even though every one of the "randomly selected" cards had the same question printed on it. But surpassing the mere glitz of such touches, popular contestants would be given easier questions, unpopular contestants harder ones. One colleague has recalled that Enright one night got a telephone call and then said to his assistant, "He thinks the Lincoln expert is boring. I want you to stiff him." "He" was Charles Revson, the president of the show's sole sponsor, Revlon Cosmetics.

The \$64,000 Question was an extraordinary hit. "It just swept the country," recalls TV announcer Jack Narz. "On the night it was on you could shoot a cannon down the street because everybody was home watching that show." More importantly, the series won the ratings war for the Tuesday night-time slot, and finished its first season as the fourth most

watched programme on television, according to the A. C. Nielsen company (whose audience projections then as now determined commercial advertising rates in the US). Nielsen projected that more than one in three Americans were watching. Sales of Revlon products rose 200% in four months, and Enright quickly followed the programme with a spin-off that was equally successful, *The \$64,000 Challenge*.

CBS's rival NBC was impressed, and outbid them for a new Barry/Enright production, *Twenty-One*. Unlike the inherently self-limiting *\$64,000 Question*, this featured an open-ended format which allowed a winning contestant to keep returning until defeated, so that there was no cap on potential winnings. Prize money spiralled, reaching several hundreds of thousands of dollars. *Twenty-One* was an overnight sensation, actually outpointing CBS's hour-long *I Love Lucy* specials. (*I Love Lucy* had till then been the most popular TV show in history).

Sometimes, even on television, money isn't everything. *Twenty-One* did not earn its ratings purely by upping the ante. In the past, quiz shows had usually put contestants up against an unseen brains trust of researchers, who combed the libraries for tough questions, or "brainbusters" as they were called. *Twenty-One* put two contestants on the screen at once, pitting them directly against each other. Under these rules, the same two could keep coming back, winning more money week after week, until the criteria for a decisive victory had been met and one had been crowned champion.

Epic battles were staged. Various "types" engaged in public combat, each bearing some flag of demographic identification into the fray: a US Marine versus an 11-year-old boy genius, a psychologist versus a Protestant minister, a black woman versus a white man, and so on. *Twenty-One* proved that knowledge of the most arcane trivia could become an attractive commodity when packaged as a weapon, and as a personalised means of conquest.

Racial, ethnic and religious conflicts had of course always been important elements in American drama, both fictional and historical. As the culture drifted toward a more unfettered consumerism after World War Two, however, 'lifestyle' emerged as an equally important battle site. Enright successfully added all these elements to the static talking-heads set-up of the quiz. At a time when American TV seemed dominated by bland, suburban sitcoms like *Father Knows Best* and cartoonish crime stoppers like *Dragnet*, the appearance in prime time of 'real people' (meaning the contestants) was a significant innovation.

Not only was the quiz show popular, it also had the virtue of offering the youth of America "intellectual geniuses" as role models, rather than gun-toting cops and cowboys. If it all seemed too good to be true, it was. The contestants on *Twenty-One* and half a dozen other shows had been deliberately supplied with the answers: the outcomes of the matches had been fixed. And Enright was caught fixing them.

With this cultural moment as its setting, *Quiz Show* focuses on the most celebrated and inflammatory of *Twenty-One*'s contestant battles (which was also, not surprisingly, the one with

best ratings): that of Herbert Stempel and Charles Van Doren. Stempel was a 29-year-old working class Jew from Queens. A husband and father, he was attending the City College of New York on Army veteran's benefits. He was tall and gawky, wore thick glasses, and came across as nervous, obsequious and boorish by turns. In a recent interview, the real Stempel has described himself, in contemporary terms, as a nerd. John Turturro, having already played Barton Fink, here secures his position as Hollywood's Jewish nerd of choice, with a bravura performance.

As Stempel's weekly earnings increase, he is vigorously sold to the public as a heroic 'little guy', living proof of the American dream – with a lot of hard work and a little bit of luck, a poor nobody can become a wealthy somebody. But there was also a darker fascination. To the public, Stempel seemed to be (as a fictional *Twenty-One* studio-hand puts it) "a freak with a sponge memory". "We wanted you to react emotionally to a contestant," Enright told an interviewer in 1989. "Whether you reacted favourably or negatively was not that important." (Enright is played by David Paymer.)

The nature of Stempel's appeal was hardly an issue to *Twenty-One*'s sponsor Geritol, an over-the-counter elixir for "tired blood", with its sales mounting handsomely during his championship run. (Martin Scorsese's cameo as Geritol's director is one of the movie's most satisfying flourishes.) If fame had come easily to Stempel, it went the same way. As Enright puts it, audience interest in Stempel "plateaus", and he is ordered to take a dive. Insult is added to injury by the question he must get wrong: "What movie won the Oscar for Best Picture in 1955?" The correct answer, *Marty*, is in fact Stempel's favourite film. He must suppress his pride and answer "On The Waterfront".

In return for Stempel's co-operation in the (live) broadcast of his toppling, the producer promises Herb the dream-opportunity of every instant star: a job as a 'personality' on a TV panel show, allowing him a long-term cash-in on his brief celebrity. Meanwhile, the show must go on. His next and final opponent, Charles Van Doren will replace him. The casting change is radical.

Cultural struggle

Behind the bright facade of popular democracy, a self-appointed cultural aristocracy still wielded power in 50s America, and the Van Dorens were charter members. Charles, as he will later humbly admit from the floor of Congress, has had "all the breaks". His father Mark (Paul Scofield) was an Ivy League literature professor and poet, his mother Dorothy (Elizabeth Wilson) was a novelist and his Uncle Carl, an important unseen presence, was one of the most prominent American historians of the era. Scofield steals several scenes with his portrayal of a pre-electronic intellectual in denial, unable to adjust to post-war American mass culture.

Charles was no exception to the family rule. Much the same age as Stempel, he held a Master's degree in astrophysics, a doctorate in literature and a faculty position with the English Department of Columbia University. As if this wasn't enough, he was a fair-haired rosy- ▶

The contest of the decade: Ralph Fiennes as Charles Van Doren, left, versus John Turturro as Herbert Stempel, right, with Jack Barry (Christopher MacDonald) in Robert Redford's 'Quiz Show'

◀ cheeked bachelor, as photogenic as, well, Ralph Fiennes (who plays him). It was if Redford himself had been cast to replace Benny Hill.

Of all the subtextual possibilities the historical quiz show scandal offers, Redford picks perhaps the most unsaleable, at least in terms of American mass-marketing theory. Corporate corruption, mass deception and the tawdry effect of media celebrity on those touched by it are all examined. Once personalities and context are in place, however, the film becomes a thoughtful look at the post-war struggle between déclassé pop culture, as retailed by the Jewish broadcasting magnates and as embodied by Stempel, and the traditional high culture of Ivy League Brahmins, whose precious genes have been carried into the age of television by Van Doren. But even more daring and surprising, the film takes the event as the basis for a complex meditation on the encounter between WASPs and Jews in America, a subject rarely treated with candour in any medium. A story that could have been developed in any of a dozen sexier directions becomes an account of the two ethnic groups bumping styles and values in New York and Washington.

Ethnic face-off

This ethnic jostling has in fact been a curiously recurrent theme in Redford's career, as actor and director. In *The Way We Were* (1973), he plays opposite Barbara Streisand, torn between loving and rejecting all that she is, does and stands for. In *The Great Gatsby* (1974), he plays Jay Gatsby, a ne'er-do-well whose WASP features hide a Jewish gangster named Meyer Wolfshiem. In *Ordinary People* (1980), he directed the story of a warm, caring Jewish shrink teaching a family of cold-fish WASPs how to love each other unconditionally after the suicide of their firstborn child, saving them from further emotional disaster. Even in *All the President's Men* (1976), he plays Bob Woodward to Dustin Hoffman's Carl Bernstein. In *Quiz Show*, his pursuit of this subject is more decided than ever. Much like a TV quiz show, this is a movie with no action sequences, and hardly any outdoor shooting. Screen excitement in the long talking-heads drama (two hours 39 minutes) is entirely contained in the reaction shots that highlight and punctuate a discourse on ethnic relations.

This critical reading of the film is not purely subjective. To understand just how deliberate Redford's focus is in *Quiz Show*, one only need watch Julian Krainin's 1989 documentary *The Quiz Show Scandal*. Produced for non-commercial television, this academically researched hour-long study contains not a single mention of Jews or WASPs. By contrast, in Redford's film, the discovery of a pattern to the ways champions from the two rival groups dethrone one another is a key dramatic clue to the existence of the otherwise elaborate cover-up. That a grant-funded documentary would avoid so difficult a subject when a Hollywood feature deals with it squarely is itself an historical event. (Interestingly, Krainin is a co-producer of the Redford film.)

It is the moral dilemma of a third character, an upper-class Jew from New England named Richard Goodwin, that gives the story a point of

view; his book *Remembering America: A Voice from the 60s* is credited as *Quiz Show*'s source. Played by Rob Morrow, Goodwin is enamoured of WASP propriety (at key points he is mistakenly called "Goodman" and "Goldwyn" by minor characters, as if to emphasise that this is indeed a story about 'passing'). Fresh out of Harvard Law School ("Number one in my class," he tells any WASP who will listen), the young lawyer is the only one to suspect anything, after reading in the paper that New York Judge Mitchell D. Schweitzer has used an obscure legal procedure to dismiss corruption charges against Enright made by a disgruntled contestant. Morrow, known for his television work as Joel Fleischman in *Northern Exposure*, masterfully invokes the spirit of the Kennedys with his measured imitations of the family's distinctive New England speech cadences. (As Catholics, the Kennedys were non-WASP outsiders who had made their way into Harvard, like Goodwin. They all chose government service, while Goodwin in fact later became a speechwriter for Robert Kennedy.)

Goodwin repeatedly professes devotion to progressive ideas, cracking sarcastic about Wall Street and McCarthyism. But his leftish Jewish instincts are at odds with his dreams of assimilation, and this becomes the central tension of *Quiz Show*. He cannot help but worship Van Doren's genteel America and covet a place in it. The manifestly guilty Van Doren realises this, and stonewalls him. Even as evidence of guilt mounts, Goodwin refuses to believe that a Columbia professor with such good cheekbones could possibly have betrayed either his personal morality or the public trust. (Exasperated at the self-deception, his wife Sandra – played by Mira Sorvino – at one point exclaims, "You're the Uncle Tom of the Jews!")

By contrast, in the presence of fellow Jew Stempel, Goodwin is visibly embarrassed. Herbie is his worst nightmare, an unbearable vision of how Charlie might be seeing him. In Yiddish terms, for Goodwin Stempel is a *shanda*, an aspect of Jewishness that is shameful to display



Faust and Mephistopheles: Van Doren sells his rosy-cheeked soul for television fame, opposite, while devil's sidekick Barry sees to the all-important product-placement, above

in front of gentiles. While the sinfully guilty Charlie gets the benefit of Goodwin's every doubt, the pathetically guilty Herbie receives only scorn and contempt.

Honorary WASPhood

The film becomes a cat-and-mouse between Jew and WASP, both externally and internally (in Goodwin's soul). Van Doren befriends him and takes him into the restricted inner sancta of his social world, dazzling him, hoping to blind him to the truth. He is invited to sit in at an old-boy poker game. (Van Doren bets high. Goodwin: "I think you're lying." Van Doren, eyebrow raised: "I think the word you mean is bluffing.") The two have lunch at the Athenaeum, a club a Jew can only visit as a member's guest. Goodwin attempts to savour the moment, but discovers that the choice of the day is a Reuben sandwich (corned beef and melted cheese on rye): "the sandwich seems to be the only Reuben in the place," he can't help but remark. He's then invited to the family's Connecticut home for father Mark's birthday party. Seriously overdressed – a dark suit for a garden party – Goodwin sits among the guests listening to the elder Van Doren reciting his own poetry. As the final touch, honorary WASPhood is more or less conferred when Goodwin is taken sailing on a New England lake.

The general refusal to believe in Van Doren's guilt stems from a question never answered: what possible reason could this brilliant golden boy have to lie? With a future before him as solid as his past, why would a man from a world where reputation is all risk all to parade himself like some carnival attraction? There is of course money to consider. At first Van Doren expresses misgivings about being coached, and Enright asks him how much he makes teaching. His reply (\$86 a week) elicits a patronising smile. But aren't trust-fund boys expected to use their salaries for pin money only? A Van Doren fortune has been sitting in the bank collecting interest ever since the family decided to back George Washington. There is also fame. But that kind? Brahmins look for their glory to history books, not the street corner.

Such questions are moot when fame begets money, and money more money. Van Doren's picture appears on the cover of *Time* magazine, an honour never achieved by any of his 'famous' relatives. He is celebrated in the press as a new kind of Sputnik-era hero, an egghead-turned-superbrain recapturing the imagination of America's youth from the likes of Elvis Presley. Proposals of marriage arrive at the network by the mailbag. Enrolment in his literature classes soars.

The quarter of a million dollars Van Doren has racked up is only a down-payment. NBC hires him as a regular for its morning newsmagazine *The Today Show*, announcing this on air after one of his quiz victories. As "special culture correspondent", he reads Blake to the television audience (which he shares with a chimpanzee named J. Fred Muggs). Offscreen, he buys a townhouse on Fifth Avenue, a Mercedes sports car and a television set for his reluctant parents.

And what of Stempel? He was the disgrun-

US Industry lingo

quiz show A high-stakes TV game programme presented during prime time, and usually requiring substantial knowledge in one or more fields. As a result of the scandal, the genre became dormant and has yet to be successfully revived.

game show A low-stakes TV game programme, based more often on luck than knowledge. Such shows are almost never presented in prime time. This genre was essentially unaffected by the scandal.

panel show An extremely low-stakes TV game programme in which the actual game is less important than chat from celebrity panellists, as judges or foils.

prime time the hours between 8 and 11 PM Eastern Time (US), when television audiences, and consequently advertising prices, are at a numerical peak.

Nielsen ratings The A. C. Nielsen company estimates audience sizes. Its figures are rarely contested.

CBS The Columbia Broadcasting System was one of the three major American commercial television networks in the 1950s, and is still in existence today. It was founded by the Consolidated Cigar Company during the late 20s.

NBC The National Broadcasting Company was another major 1950s network also still in existence. It was founded by David Sarnoff of the Radio Corporation of America as the first trans-continental radio network in 1927.



tled contestant, of course. After blowing all his money on a fraudulent Florida real estate scheme, he has been sitting at home in Queens living off his in-laws, waiting at the telephone for the TV job that never comes. Enright will not even return his calls. With nothing else to do, Stempel has been looking on, seething with envy as Van Doren becomes the darling of the media, knowing that "the world's smartest man" is reading from a script that had once belonged to him. He also thinks Van Doren snubbed him on the night of his final appearance on *Twenty-One*, and ruminates on this slight, inflaming his outrage.

Wronged by one medium, what does one do? Go to a rival medium, of course (fully integrated conglomerates were still rare in the 50s). Stempel takes his story to the newspapers, but juicy though it is, no one is biting. (A better job of historical muckraking could have been done here, given the remarkable reluctance of the New York press to follow up the story. The Hearst newspapers, usually eager for scandal, only printed a watered-down version of the accusations, claiming lack of evidence. *The New York Times* – which had refused to print similar accusations from another \$64,000 *Question* contestant a year earlier – didn't run the story at all.)

Enright has protected himself well. As soon as the New York District Attorney's office announces Grand Jury Hearings, the producer contacts all the former contestants and convinces them that they are the ones likely to be punished if the truth is told. (It was later estimated that as many as 100 witnesses committed perjury at these hearings.). Moreover, as a 'favour' to a nervous Stempel during his quiz-success, Enright had paid for daily visits to a

New York analyst. When the accusations surface, so do clinical records of "psychological instability". An affidavit from Stempel had long ago been secured, explicitly denying any cheating ever took place, signed against the promise of the panel show job.

Invalid testimony

The film also ignores an extremely interesting theory as to why Judge Schweitzer invoked a law that had not been used since 1869 to keep Stempel's testimony from the public. In the early 1950s much of American television was broadcast live from New York, just as radio had been. However, as the industry grew richer, filmed series with action sequences became standard, and most drama production shifted to Hollywood, which had plenty of studio space to let as TV commandeered its audience. According to one inside source, NBC president David Sarnoff threatened to move all network operations to Hollywood if New York was going to prove itself a hostile environment for the broadcasting business. Schweitzer, who had political aspirations, did not want to be held responsible for the loss of hundreds of local jobs. Whether the theory is true or not, he cited the "psychological instability", and declared the witness's testimony invalid, closing the case. Further interest in the history and the cover-up is better satisfied by viewing Krainin's documentary or reading William Boddy's authoritative book, *Fifties Television*. The film now moves away from history to pursue Redford's fascination with America's ethnic pecking order.

Redford has also omitted Enright's remarkable defence, at the time, of his actions. Even after engineering a cover-up that involved crim-

inal perjury, he simply claimed to be just another showman working in the biz. When he felt the show needed more drama, he turned off the air-conditioning to make the contestant sweat. Two armed security guards came out on stage and delivered the questions in a sealed envelop directly from a "bank security vault". Deceit or showmanship? The actions of an Al Capone, or a P.T. Barnum? How, he asked, does such behaviour differ from what goes on anywhere and everywhere in commercial television? If it is criminal to create illusions on TV, why is professional wrestling allowed to stay on the air? In effect, Enright justified himself by claiming that he had only been guilty of doing his job too well, of being too entertaining. He must have been convincing. Not a single person did a moment of jail time or even paid a fine as a result of the scandal. After the truth came out, dozens of former contestants were charged and found guilty of perjury. All pleaded guilty; all received suspended sentences.

35 years later, the moral surrealism of this defence raises a profound question about the nature of television, and of mass culture in general. When a TV show is intended to attract and entertain, isn't it a given that producers will cultivate what audiences find attractive and eliminate the rest? With the wave of tabloid journalism and sensationalistic talk shows sweeping American TV in recent years, no question could be more current.

Redford's own conclusion is clear. The movie climaxes at a Congressional hearing where the *Twenty-One* antagonists are put before the public one last time. Stempel, who had insisted on the truth for months, is humiliated, while Van Doren is forgiven his far greater sins and even praised for his courageous repentance by a parade of WASP government officials. One Congressman, a dark-haired man with a working class accent and a non-WASP name, Derounian, is not impressed. He grew up in "a different part of New York", he says, and admonishes Van Doren for lying and cheating, plain and simple. The audience of citizens watching from the gallery applauds. Minutes later, we learn that the Columbia Board of Regents has dismissed Van Doren from the faculty.

The story ends, but history went on. The record shows that even among publicly exposed cheats, privilege has its privileges, punishment its pecking order. Van Doren, having gotten more than his fill of mass adoration, retreated to the family's Connecticut home, where he has lived in wooded isolation for the last 35 years, working for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Stempel, however, has been working for the New York City Transit Authority, still presumably mixing with the masses.

The dramatist fared better than either of his character actors. Despite the complicity of NBC and Geritol in fixing the contests, Enright took the fall, and was rewarded for his loyalty. He kept quiet for a decade, as the owner of a small radio station in California, before returning to national TV as the producer of *The Joker is Wild*, an afternoon gameshow on CBS, with his old sidekick Jack Barry as quizmaster. They later developed a children's version of the show.

'Quiz Show' opens on 24 February

Banned in India, 'Bandit Queen' opens in Britain this month. Director Shekhar Kapur talks with film-maker Udayan Prasad about its making

WOMAN ON THE EDGE

I saw *Bandit Queen* at the first of its two screenings at this year's London Film Festival. With a considerable reputation garnered at Cannes and other film festivals, it was also already notorious, having been banned in India for violence, nudity and the graphic depiction of rape. In his introduction, director Shekhar Kapur warmed up an already expectant audience by advising them to protect themselves from a tough and uncompromising film about the appalling situation of millions of Indian women. He told us that he had heard that people were coming all the way from Bombay just to heckle the film during the festival screenings. With a practised air, he asked any "hecklers" to be patient and at least to see the film through to the end before judging it. This must have worked: or maybe it was the opening shot in which Seema Biswas, the film's star, looks straight into the camera and announces herself: "I'm Phoolan Devi, sisterfuckers. Me!" Either way, I didn't hear a squeak of dissent during the screening.

Bandit Queen is about the extraordinary Phoolan Devi (Seema Biswas). Used and abused since childhood by almost all the men in her life, she eventually became India's most celebrated modern outlaw. Probably because of her involvement in the killing of 22 higher caste Hindu men – in revenge for the murder of her lover and her own subsequent gang rape – she has become a heroine for hundreds of millions of low caste Indians.

Some three or four years ago, I had come across an early draft of the film's script, written by Mala Sen from her own book of the same title. It tackled its subject by dramatising events from her life in chronological order, on the assumption that a blow-by-blow depiction would by itself be enough to lay bare the horrors of Indian society. I remember being surprised at how tedious the story seemed to be. Though it contained one horrific incident after another I found myself emotionally disengaged alarmingly quickly. By the end, I was none the wiser about Phoolan Devi or indeed about India. Clearly events have to form the structure, but to add to what I already knew I felt I needed only those which had brought about significant change in her situation or state of mind. I needed to develop a rapport with her, to understand what made her tick. One possible solution was to offer the life from the heroine's point of view. This is the solution Kapur has chosen.

Like many other film makers he had felt that there was a film to be made of this story but had not pursued the idea with any vigour until Channel 4 sent him Mala Sen's book and script. "When I read Mala's book I saw in it the possibility of doing a very very personal film. What the book did for me was to put Phoolan Devi's story in a wider context. It's like a narration of the history of a particular era of the caste system. It talks about something so much bigger than just the story of one woman. I always suspected that Phoolan Devi had a relationship to a larger problem but never quite understood it till I read the book. The book is what really got me thinking seriously about making this film. The script was about four hours long and looked more like a docudrama, unfolding her life scene after scene after scene. It lacked ►





"What I was trying to do was to create the omnipresence of the caste system, but without saying every time, 'Hey, look! We are talking about the caste system!'"

◀ context. Perhaps it had Mala's context but it needed mine as a director."

To achieve this Kapur faced an additional problem: the subject of his film lived in a social environment alien to most of its likely audience. (As the film had been commissioned by Channel 4, its audience was undoubtedly going to be largely western.) He had to find ways in which to present Devi's environment – the Hindu caste system which had dictated the shape of Phoolan's life – dramatically. "There was a huge fear in both [Channel 4 commissioning editor] Farrukh Dhondy's and my mind that the audience would miss the relevance of the caste system." Vehemently opposed to such explanatory devices as voice-over, he took the risk of relying instead on a truthful portrayal of the appalling reality of the lives of Phoolan Devi and her family, to provide non-Indian audiences with at least a notion of the oppressive nature of this odious social structure. "What I was trying to do was create the omnipresence of the caste system. The threat and the omnipresence throughout every frame of the film, without actually saying directly every time, 'Hey, look! We are talking about the caste system!'" This risk, to my mind, has paid off. Western audiences may not fully come to comprehend that caste, unlike class, is something that succeeding generations of a family can never escape, but the film will help them understand that the lot of the low castes is wretched indeed – and to begin with, this is enough.

Outstanding performances

Bandit Queen marks a considerable departure for Kapur from the mainstream Bombay cinema with which he has mainly been associated. He started working life as an accountant but soon gave that up for the life of an actor. In 1983 he got the chance to direct his first feature *Masoom* (*Innocent*) and since then he has combined both careers with *Mr India* (1987), a children's fantasy and his most notable success as director. By the time the package arrived from Channel 4, he was beginning to be dissatisfied with the limitations of commercial Bombay cinema. The scripts he was being sent were entirely plot driven and did not deal with their subject matter in ways with which he felt any affinity.

For me the outstanding feature of *Bandit Queen* is the central performances, in particular those of Seema Biswas and Sunita Bhatt as the adult and child Phoolan respectively. Their contribution, as much as anything, allows us some meaningful understanding of her motivations. Bhatt had been found by casting director Tig-manshu Dhulia in the slums of Delhi. One of the first scenes in the shooting schedule was of the 11-year-old Phoolan's first night with her husband, who was 20 years older. "I realised that was a mistake because when I got out to shoot the scene Sunita told me that she wasn't going to do any scene that had anything to do with marriage in it. When I asked why, she said her parents had told her that if she does a marriage scene that means she'd get married so she should not do that. So I said, well it's not a marriage scene. But when I explained what the scene was about, she started crying. She said 'I can't do it.' When I asked her why, she wouldn't

tell me. Then finally she said that she was already married and she was very soon to be sent away to her husband. That moment, going to her husband, was her greatest fear. So I decided not to shoot and just cancelled that set. And what I did was to keep her with me throughout the shoot, much as I keep my assistants constantly by my side, so that she would understand this whole thing as a game. She would see the other actors do it, and see Seema do it. Seema would go through something tremendously outrageous or dramatic or emotional and Sunita would see at the end of the shot that she is still Seema Biswas."

Eventually Kapur decided that Bhatt was ready to have another go. "I kept the camera very tight. I didn't explain to her what her husband was trying to do but she understood what he was playing at. So when his hands would go out of frame she understood that those hands were going where they were not supposed to go. And she just reacted so emotionally and in such a real way that I got frightened. I thought that I had put her through a real trauma. And when I said cut, I was relieved because at 'cut' she had suddenly smiled and looked at me and asked, 'Uncle, is that all right?' She called me uncle. I said, 'Yes, yes it's all right.' She said 'I think I can do it better.' So she had learned acting. And like a very good actress, she had used her own fears to perform. There's no doubt in my mind that those fears are real."

Seema Biswas, though a trained and highly accomplished actress, had to deal with a different problem. Actresses in India have no experience of appearing nude or simulating sex, let alone being raped and dragged naked through a village square. All this she was required to do. Even in their most liberal phase Indian censors had only allowed glimpses of actresses in wet T-shirts, and very occasionally perhaps a nipple. They were not being ridiculously prudish or out of touch with the mores of Indian society; in fact, they were reflecting them with remarkable accuracy. (I remember getting changed for a swim with some of my male cousins, one of them a director of some renown, miles from anywhere, by a river in the middle of a jungle. As I stripped with Western abandon, I was astonished to see them, towels wrapped around their waists, struggling to pull on their trunks and terrified of exposing themselves to each other.) Therefore, I have no reason to suppose that Indian drama schools teach actors and actresses to take nudity in their stride, or breed familiarity with the portrayal of rape. "I think it speaks a lot for Seema's commitment. When we

"We talked about Phoolan Devi, and Seema Biswas, being a method actress, brought out a whole series of definitions, conclusions and changes"

first started the scene where she is forced to walk naked to the village well she couldn't do it. She just broke down. I was shooting the scene at the end of the schedule. By then, in her mind, she and her character had merged: the dividing line had blurred. So it was no longer Seema playing Phoolan Devi, it was Seema being dragged naked. But Phoolan Devi had to be kicked and beaten into doing it. Seema obviously wasn't going to be kicked and beaten. There was no way I could make her do it by persuasion. She almost had a nervous breakdown because she couldn't do it. So I called the shoot off and finished the scene later. All the cut-aways of the villagers watching I had managed to shoot the first time. And then I shot the naked walk four months later – including the composite wide shots (which included the speculating villagers) – by when she had once again managed to separate herself from the character. She was able to do it knowing she was just playing a role, something she had not done for the rest of the film."

Edge of a precipice

Seema Biswas' contribution to the film is remarkable for much more than her ability to handle the rape and violence. Her portrayal, of a woman living on the edge of a precipice and determined never to fall, grips from beginning to end. Kapur helped her arrive at this performance by constantly reminding her of the contradictions within all of us. "We talked about Phoolan Devi and she, being a method actress, brought out a whole series of definitions, conclusions and changes. Every actor does that, it's a very professional thing to do. But that made me very uneasy. So the next day I asked her to talk about herself. After a few hours I asked her to conclude herself and she contradicted everything she had said about herself. Just as you and I would, because we are all a mass of contradictions. We are not definable. The more you define characters, the more specific you are about them, the less human they become. And by defining characters you are making the film less and less human and more and more simple."

Kapur also based the film's visual style on similar notions. "I was looking for constantly moving cameras to create a sense of uncertainty. Not knowing where the next bit of oppression is coming from, not knowing where the next bullet might come from, constantly looking over your shoulder. I wanted the viewers to feel the discomfort of her life and I didn't want them to feel easy with it. Because if you are able to predict a film you are able to defend yourself. For example, in cinema all over the world the viewer is now totally at ease with the presentation of violence. So you know exactly what is coming; you prepare yourself and you enjoy it. I didn't want them to enjoy it, I wanted them unprepared, defenceless."

According to Kapur, Channel 4's insecurity about Indian crews meant he was forced to start with a British director of photography. In fact he had wanted it crewed entirely by Bombay technicians, but was overruled. However, by the end of the shoot only two non-Indians remained. His usual director of photography,



Seema Biswas, above, as Phoolan Devi, the powerful female leader, in Shekhar Kapur's 'Bandit Queen'

Ashok Mehta, came in when Kapur found it impossible to continue with the British cameraman ten days into the shoot. This meant that there was no time for the kind of discussions they would normally have had, particularly as "I tend to keep, as far as I can, my D.O.P. within my discussions with actors prior to the shoot. So that he understands the sub-text because that drives the film for me."

Rival realities

The scene which caused him most concern was the massacre of 22 men in Behmai in Uttar Pradesh in northern India at the hands of Phoolan Devi and her gang. "I said to Ashok, 'My big fear is that it will just come out as an action scene. Ashok, we must do something, because I don't want the audience to view it as an action scene. It is not an action scene. It is the most pivotal thing. I do know that I want to portray that it just happened - that the killing was something that just took off. But I want the audience to delve into her mind in places. I want the viewer to understand, or not to make judgements.' And I remember, one or two days before I was due to shoot I said 'Ashok, we're going to shoot the whole sequence in top shots, we're not just going to get in amongst the action.'

"From the moment Phoolan Devi sees the well, the camera moves awkwardly on top - always looking down, so as to get a sense of equality between the dacoits and the villagers, and to try and convince the audience not to judge. And it only came down at one point when I wanted people to look back into her mind - when she got angry and started taking everybody's turbans off. And at that stage I just bleached it out and slowed it down.

"That decision was made when we were costuming the film. I remember telling the costume designer that I wanted Phoolan in black, the rest of her gang in light colours and all the Thakurs (the 22 higher caste victims) in white. Because the more I bleached it the less differentiation there would be between the people. I wanted them all to start looking similar. I wanted to put the scene in the realm of representation. Everybody will look strange except for this one black figure moving around. I wanted to push that scene in such a way that you come out remembering it as something totally illogical. What you have not seen is objective reality. Because the reality of showing objectively what happened is very different from the reality of the people who were there killing or getting killed, or so I assume. For them it was a totally different reality and I'm much more concerned with that reality. That reality has the reality of life and death and mysticism and destiny in it."

I'm not convinced that Kapur's ideas about rival realities work, but by and large his determination to show us the story only as it unfolds for Devi is admirably maintained. The one obvious exception is an expository scene towards the end of the film in which we discover before Devi does that the authorities need to keep her alive for their own purposes. The unfortunate consequence is a diffusion of narrative tension.

Who's banning who?

To his credit Kapur has not allowed a television budget to cramp *Bandit Queen's* style. That may be because you get a lot more for your pound in India than in Britain, but I am convinced it has much more to do with an intrinsically cinematic approach. However, the film was financed by a British television company and

the film's sensibilities are not Indian; its banning in India cannot have come as a surprise to Kapur.

"I remember the producer asking me if I would shoot that naked walk twice. Once with a torn cloth on. I told him that would make no sense at all. You might as well not have the scene - it would ruin the film even to shoot something like that. Because we were shooting something very real throughout the film and the moment you do something like that the psychology of the film changes and affects all the other scenes. And I refused to do it. I don't see why, when we are showing something that does happen on a regular basis in India, why we should censor it out."

I could not agree more. Undoubtedly such things happen regularly in India and if the film is to have any effect, and to broaden debate, it has to be shown in India. The irony of all this is that Phoolan Devi herself has now publicly denounced *Bandit Queen* for reasons which seem to have more in common with the censor's usual stance than with any substantial quarrel with the reality portrayed. In another twist, the Indian High Court recently ordered a temporary lifting of the ban to enable screenings of *Bandit Queen* for the Film Federation of India. This has resulted in the film being chosen as India's entry for the 1994 foreign language Oscar nominations. Should *Bandit Queen* go on to get an Oscar, pressure for the permanent lifting of the ban may well mount to effective levels. But Phoolan Devi, aware that she is a powerful political force, is threatening to stand for parliament, not least to make sure *Bandit Queen* stays off Indian screens. "I'm Phoolan Devi, sisterfuckers. Me!"

'Bandit Queen' opens on 17 February and is reviewed on page 40 of this issue

Don't try to find excuses for 'Welcome II the Terrordome'. Although it has been promoted as the first authentically independent black British film, it is unimaginably bad – and also politically repugnant. By Paul Gilroy

UNWELCOME

● It is very easy indeed to trash Ngozi Onwurah's *Welcome II the Terrordome*. Hyped, desperately, as Black Britain's first authentically independent film, *Terrordome* is unimaginably bad, artistically and conceptually inept, the script an embarrassment, the narrative incoherent, much of the acting risible, especially Valentine Nonyela's Spike. 90 minutes spent in the cinema ought to offer at least *something* stimulating, engaging or constructive. The modest gains of the last 20 years will be placed in jeopardy, through the film's opportunistic, pseudo-political flirtations with racial absolutism and misogyny. Worse still, because so subversive, its incompetence will unleash the laughter of the world against black British cultural activists, just as we seemed to have found a distinctive voice. Our maturity, our precious integrity and our future development as producers, critics and users of black culture – and dare I say as a political community? – depend absolutely upon our freedom from any defensive need to seek out excuses for such all-round feebleness. The desire to redeem *Terrordome* by fashioning a heroic account of the "guerrilla" circumstances of its production is understandable but utterly misguided.

Punch and Judy

Though the film invites outright dismissal, it also demands urgent response. This ought eventually to include a detailed critique of the film *as a film* – I resist the temptation to provide that here. Its manifest formal inadequacies should not be overlooked, but must be set aside for now if we are to tackle the implications of its well-publicised arrival. A low budget and the continuity problems of an overlong production process will be cited in the film's defence: but it cannot be adequately addressed on such grounds. Put another way, the film's casual contempt for cinema – its conventions, styles and languages – must be exposed, but this contempt should be considered less important than its evident hostility towards the black cultures and political traditions it purports to celebrate, even as it reduces them to the triviality of a racialised Punch and Judy Show. Despite or because of its comprehensive failure of imagination the film affords chilling insight into the confusion characterising contemporary black Britain's political culture, but also into the moral vacuity of its nascent cultural industries. *Terrordome* is a product of blaxploitation in the most precise, numb and clinical sense of that sorry word. That it is proffered in the name of emancipation by someone claiming insider status neither excuses it nor renders it harmless.

The film begins by retelling an old and moving tale of New World slave-suicide. An "extended" African family refuse the modern unfreedoms of slavery. They seek death, or release, or return to Africa, by walking back into the waters of the Atlantic. Instead, they are mysteriously transported to another location: the Terrordome, a decaying English city rendered futuristic by a garnish of contemporary Americana – crack, gang conflict, hip-hop. This urban dystopia – a weird hybrid of Walter Hill's *Streets of Fire* (1984) and Roy Ward Baker's *Flame in the Streets* (1961) – is a strangely timeless place, essentially genteel, English, and untouched by the techno-scientific revolution even of our own era. People wear Fila trainers, use telephones with rotary dials, say fuck a lot, make jokes about Michael Jackson's complexion and are still listening to N.W.A. and Chaka Khan singing 'I Feel For You'. Happily, they are apparently able to summon an N.H.S. doctor at will. This world, oddly familiar to the viewer despite its supposed futurism, is a new home to the refusenik slaves who are now magically reconstituted as "The McBride Family" and seem to be doing nicely thank-you in the hard drug business (though unlike the drug barons of yesteryear, they do not seem to be investing their illicit profits in technology and lifestyles of conspicuous consumption). Radical the rapping Patriarch rules the McBride clan, and also controls the Blue Posse, a black gang in a state of fratricidal war with its rivals (who are coded red). His brother-in-law Spike is sexually involved with Jodie, a white woman (also reincarnated from the slave era, though without the ambiguous benefits of purifying sea-baptism). A clumsy voice-over, struggling in vain to compensate for script and acting, informs us



Ngozi Onwurah's 'Welcome II the Terrordome'

that "Nobody in the Posse was happy about their Number Two fucking a white girl."

Jodie is pregnant. Jason, her erstwhile husband, is a white drug-dealer in another part of town. To punish his ex-partner for her racial treachery, Jason tells the police that the Blue Posse have pulled off a big deal and enlists a less than fearsome gang of bikers to teach her a lesson. This results in (a) the incarceration of Radical and Spike (b) the accidental death of Radical's son and heir Hector and (c) Jodie's violent humiliation at Jason's hands. With Malcolm X on the soundtrack, she gives birth, battered and alone, to a dead foetus, confirming the impossibility of transracial intimacy. In jail, Radical the Patriarch buries the hatchet with the red gang-leader, in a scene of wordless black male bonding. Finally these natural leaders escape together, to launch race war on the whites. Grieving for Hector, the Patriarch's wife Angela ups the body count by blowing away cops, bikers and assorted racists. She is hanged for her trouble. Errant Spike is punished by the Patriarch and cured of his jungle fever, the film's central preoccupation coming momentarily into focus: "You sleep with the enemy. We all pay the cost." Hanged Angela is reborn, alone and mother-earthily in derelict inner London, while the male slaves who became the McBride Posse re-appear from the waves, apparently on the coast of Africa. The film ends as they all break their shackles. (This tantalising sketch in fact does scant justice to the storyline in its dizzying opacity.)

Using slavery

We too must start with slavery, the film's framing device, and with the politics of its remembrance. Sadly, there is no perception in the film of the substantive ethical problems of using slavery as so minimal a cipher for the film's 'ethnic' credentials. Presented as an activity no more systematic or serious than the actions of a handful of (timelessly) evil white individuals, "slavery" is essentially deployed here as a sign to tune black audiences onto an appropriate emotional frequency. This is done in a dishonest manner, conveying cruel contempt for the audience. Throughout *Terrordome*, such banal citations are the repudiation of history and its replacement by hollow pastiche. A sublime tale of black catastrophe and suffering is made a pointless parenthesis around a pathetic stab at an "action thriller", as the press release calls it. Can this be right? Can it be good or just? The film invites its black viewers to "make peace" with those dead Africans, their ancestors. What a monument to their memory! Forget reparations. Forget the dignity of protracted mourning. Come back *Mandingo!*, all is forgiven!

The film's callous indifference and deviousness recurs later on, when South African history is invoked in a "necklacing" sequence, then and more significantly when the glamour of the drug economy is flirted with and ultimately justified, firstly in the sacred name of family survival and secondly – when whites become the customers – as a low-intensity form of racial warfare. The recent history of African-Americans has been appropriated to lend spurious depth to the arid, character-less wasteland of



Sleeping with the enemy in 'Welcome II the Terrordome'

what passes for a plot. During their transition from American beach to future Babylon, the McBride clan inexplicably acquire a matriarch, a mammy figure not involved in the initial encounter with slavery, nor in the post-revolutionary rebirth (neither are the children the movie has her take care of). With the ancestral wisdom that befits her age and gender, she carries an additional burden: she is the director's principal mouthpiece, the authoritative female counterpart to Flipper Purify's murderous father in Spike Lee's 1991 *Jungle Fever*. In yet another instance of the radical indifference to sympathy or respect due, the past is conscripted into the service of the present as this semi-character – the dead boy's great grandmother – is named Rosa Parks, after the American Civil Rights heroine of the 1950s. Invoking Civil Rights to lend credibility to a film utterly opposed to this movement's mass non-violence is inexplicable, except as product and confirmation of a limitless cynicism. Recasting "Rosa Parks" as a spokeswoman for 1990s racial absolutism and separatism is a perverse and brutal rather than a playful act. Like her namesake, this Rosa Parks is tired, though not of segregated seating and having to stand in half-full buses in a Jim Crow South. This Rosa Parks is "tired of white people", and attacks the consequences of race mixing with all the enthusiasm and finality of a B.N.P. militant.

The disrespect for history and contemporary black politics is confirmed in other ways. Perhaps the kindest thing that can be said is that Onwurah has taken the image world of the hip-hop video and attempted to elevate it into

a total vision. But these are videos produced to market deeply racist images of violence and brutality to the young white male suburbanites who comprise hip-hop's major market. This group's enthusiasm for blackness as both pleasure and danger is well known as a fissile neo-minstrelsy, gender and sexuality the predictable conduits for the crossover. Is there really legitimate scope to amplify such images, or to turn them into sources of pleasure for British blacks?

Terrordome presents men and women in sternly segregated lifeworlds that are anything but futuristic. Housewife Angela's angry eruption from the private world of home and family in search of revenge against whites merely compounds and extends the family tragedy – it certainly doesn't resolve it. Her departure from domesticity is nothing but mimicry, of the hyper-masculinity the film so exalts. Her son Hector, committed to following in his criminal father's footsteps, had attempted the same thing prematurely: for both, the inappropriate desire to be manly ends in death. *Terrordome* promises a different, better fate for 'real' men. The power of the Patriarch is enhanced as he moves beyond his personal grief and leads the newly unified gangs into organised military vengeance. The acts of rebellion are interspersed with the stalest imagery of all-male martial arts drill, a focus which suggests the film's idiotic compact with inhumanity.

Terrordome pretends to endorse black revolution: but this is a partial and selective revolution which seeks to destroy decadent society while leaving market structures undisturbed.

Of the other components of the film's pre-political, fascist idiom, the vicious anti-feminism has already been identified. The capitulation to gun fetishism and the related presentation of violence, as the sole key to social relations and their transformation, is deeply and ominously fascistic, in its endorsement of militarism and in its fantastic figuration of power through muscled male bodies – drilled, tuned, armed, uniformed and synchronised as Onwurah's warriors set out on the path towards racial war. Fascistic too is the film's contempt for democracy, its enthusiasm for the natural "African" aristocracy represented by the Patriarch, and its resolute affirmation of the strength that racial purity is alone imagined to provide. The black body politic is configured here in masculinist form, purged not only of all tenderness, but of pity and most importantly of love.

Occult mood

No doubt the suggestion that a film made by a black woman director has fascistic elements will be resisted. Emphatic insistence is needed, for this claim's plausibility, that fascism is not merely Europe's private, internal drama, nor simply synonymous with Nazism (which was in truth only one of its variants). Recent history at home and abroad proves that fascism exists in a plurality of forms, an ever-present possibility awaiting release from the unstable equilibrium of normality (this, after all, is why we still try to legislate against it). Do not victims of that white supremacy with which fascism has rightly been associated have a special moral obligation *not* to reproduce the same bitter logic and occult mood in their own political and cultural practice?

All over this planet people are being slaughtered in the name of absolute difference, intermixture being understood increasingly in terms of impurity, loss, weakness and dilution. People whose bodies, affiliations and languages blur entrenched lines and confound racial, ethnic or tribal typologies are being eradicated. It is no pleasure to report that *Welcome II the Terrordome* gleefully appears to endorse the same authoritarian project. The fascistic sensibilities it parades are central to its populist aspirations, but even more alarming is the fascistic identification it solicits and projects as a form of racialised pleasure. For these reasons above all it should not pass unchallenged. In the guise of politics, the commercial machinery of a sentimental anti-politics is operating. At a time when bold African American writers like Elaine Brown and David Hilliard, key participants in the party-political pathologies of Black Power, are exposing the grim cost to 60s radicalism of misogyny and gun culture, this recycling of that radicalism's disastrous clichés is the gravest of errors. That this is being done by a black elite who have turned the slogan "By Any Means Necessary" into a license for their self-serving antics is heartbreaking. It would truly be a tragedy if *Terrordome* finds an audience so immiserated, disenchanting and powerless that it can be satisfied and excited by the film's dismal, hopeless vision.

'Welcome II the Terrordome' opened on 20 January and is reviewed on page 56 of this issue

STRAW DOGS

THEY WANT TO SEE BRAINS FLYING OUT?

'Straw Dogs' is due for cinematic re-release. What led Peckinpah to make it, and what was it like on set? David Weddle explains, and talks to the survivors

● Critics have never quite known what to do about Sam Peckinpah. Even at the peak of his career in the late 60s and early 70s, when many hailed him as one of the most brilliant film-makers of his generation, as many condemned him as a misogynist, sadist, even a fascist. (For the record, he actively supported Liberal Democratic politicians.) In the late 70s, when both his life and art spiralled into a nihilistic abyss, even his most ardent defenders abandoned him. Yet as much as we may want to turn away from Peckinpah, to shrug him off and forget him, we cannot.

The great Peckinpah revival started in the early 1980s, a little before he died. The first sparks were struck by a fanatic handful of film directors, academics and critics, who insisted that this rude delinquent was the most important American director of the last 50 years. Seven books have since been published and there are at least another three in the works (not to mention my own *If They Move... Kill 'Em!*). In 1993 the BBC produced a feature-length documentary on him, and that November the Amiens film festival held a nine-day Peckinpah retrospective in which the entire body of his work – from his first crude kinescope *Portrait of a Madonna* to the Julian Lennon rock videos that he directed near the end of his life – was shown. Clearly, with the new print of *Straw Dogs* about to tour Britain at a time when violent subject matter is firmly at the centre of debate, Peckinpah is once again a palpable presence. Violence is at the core of that film, and its director certainly knew it.

"*Straw Dogs* is about a guy who finds out a few nasty secrets about himself, about his marriage, about where he is, about the world around him," Peckinpah told one interviewer. "It's about the violence within all of us. The violence which is reflecting on the political condition of the world today. It serves as a cathartic effect. Someone may feel a strange sick exultation at the violence, but

he should then ask himself: 'What is going on in my heart?'"

The strange thing is that no one would have guessed from Sam Peckinpah's early career that violence would become the dominating note of his work. But the sensational debut of *The Wild Bunch* in 1969 changed all that. In the picture's opening and closing shoot-outs, Peckinpah and his editors Louis Lombardo and Bob Wolfe intercut variable-speed footage and created dizzying kaleidoscopes of carnage that caused riots at the picture's first screenings, and forever changed the art of filmmaking.

The movie thrust Peckinpah into the lime-light; *Time*, *Life*, *The New Yorker* and dozens of high-brow critics declared him one of the greatest film-makers of his generation. The press dubbed him "Bloody Sam" and "The Picasso of Violence", and he was soon a bigger star than any of the actors who appeared in his movies.

This fame concealed a deadly double edge. No one seemed any more to recall that *The Westerner* had been far less violent than its counterparts on television, or to remember the naive romantic scenes between Elsa and Heck in *Ride the High Country* or the subtle characterisations of *Noon Wine*. All anyone wanted to write about now were his "ballets of blood"; all they wanted Peckinpah to talk about was violence.

Warner Bros had no faith in the picture he directed right after *The Wild Bunch*, a lyrical allegory called *The Ballad of Cable Hogue*. They dumped it into second-run theatres with barely a ripple of publicity. In a couple of weeks it sank to the bottom half of double bills on the drive-in and grind-house circuit, then disappeared altogether. Already in dispute with Columbia, Peckinpah denounced Warners in a series of press conferences and soon found himself *persona non grata* at yet another major Hollywood studio.

If *Hogue* had been a hit, Peckinpah might have had a very different career. *Hogue's* failure solidified the perception of the Hollywood power brokers that Peckinpah was an 'action' director, a high-toned equivalent of Andrew McLaglen or Michael Winner. Peckinpah attended an endless round of development meetings where he fought hard for a chance to direct a series of tantalising projects: adaptations of such novels as Max Evans' *The Hi Lo Country*, James Gould Cozzens' *Castaway*, Joan Didion's *Play it as it Lays*, and Ken Kesey's *Sometimes a Great Notion*. But every time he failed to get the job, or the project off the ground. Producers either thought the stories too 'soft', or that their psychological subtleties were beyond Peckinpah's grasp. Where were all those slow motion shoot-outs that he was so famous for?

Then Daniel Melnick, who had produced *Noon Wine*, came to Peckinpah with an offer. Melnick had bought the rights to a novel by a Scottish writer, Gordon M. Williams, called *The Siege of Trencher's Farm*. He had shown it to Martin Baum, the head of ABC Pictures, who agreed that *Siege* had the makings of a strong action picture. It told the story of an American college professor who, along with his wife and daughter, moves to a farmhouse in a remote village in the English countryside where he hopes to find peace and quiet and time to complete a book. But the family is terrorised by a group of local hooligans who, by the climax of the novel, lay siege to the house. The professor is forced to defend his family: with his back against the wall, he does so savagely and successfully.

This was pure exploitation melodrama with a plot as old as movies: the meek bookworm pushed too far. When his passive facade cracks, the professor turns on his tormentors in righteous wrath and emerges victorious. The story had been used in hundreds of westerns, gangster and boxing pictures, and by such comedians as Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd and Harry Langdon.

Manson to My Lai

Melnick thought the tissue-thin narrative and characters could be turned into something of substance. He saw possibilities in a story about an East Coast liberal-pacifist thrust into a violent inferno and forced to fight for his life, thus confronting his own repressed barbarity. If anyone could make an important film out of it, Peckinpah could.

Baum, who'd seen and loved *The Wild Bunch*, agreed. Melnick had already commissioned a screenplay from David Zelag Goodman, who had co-written *Lovers and Other Strangers* and the adaptation for Jack Schaefer's classic Western novel, *Monte Walsh*. But Baum didn't like Goodman's script, so ABC offered Peckinpah \$200,000 to rewrite it with Goodman, and to direct it.

Once more Peckinpah was being asked to spin flax into gold, but Baum and Melnick had promised to give him a free hand. He respected and trusted Melnick, yet it was with a twinge of bitterness that he accepted this assignment; he had told the press on several occasions that he would never make another blood bath like *The Wild Bunch*. Trapped in the Hollywood high-stakes game by his own financial and psychological needs, he felt he had no choice. One night shortly before he left for London, Peckinpah sat up drinking in the Malibu Colony house he been renting since the wrap of *Cable Hogue*. With him was Joe Bernhard, an old high school pal from Fresno. "All right," Peckinpah said to Bernhard through gritted teeth when the bottle between them was nearly empty. "They want to see brains flying out? I'll give them brains flying out!"

He left for England at the end of May, 1970, took a small office at Universal's London headquarters, and began work on the screenplay. Baum was right, Goodman's script did need work. But Goodman was a skilled craftsman and he had given Peckinpah what was so essential: a solid structure and the basic components of the characters and their dramatic conflicts.

A decent, peace-loving man is besieged by evil forces coming at him from all directions. Finally the mild-mannered hero is pushed to the brink and transformed – like Jesus at Armageddon – from pacifist to righteous warrior. Here was a fantasy of potency for ordinary middle-class men, men plagued by bill collectors, domineering bosses, marriages gone cold for reasons too convoluted to comprehend, and inner demons that gnawed at their self esteem.

In 1970 that repressed rage seemed to be racing up through the fissures of the American landscape and spewing out everywhere: as well as the Manson Family, there was the case of Charles Whitman. This former altar boy and Eagle Scout, when an honour student in architecture, climbed to the top of a 27-storey tower on the University of Texas campus and proceeded methodically to shoot 45 of his fellow ►

The worm turns: Dustin Hoffman as David Sumner seizes the shotgun and the initiative in 'Straw Dogs'



◀ students, killing 12. (Peckinpah said later: "Boy, there was an honour student, the good guy, the Boy Scout leader who was kind to his mother and small animals. Whether he enjoyed shooting all those people isn't the issue. The issue is that he did it. He had all that violence in him and he went up into the tower and let it out.") And then there was My Lai, the massacre in Vietnam of 567 innocent villagers by a platoon of American soldiers led by Lieutenant William Calley.

From New York to California students were taking over college administration buildings and shutting down classes to protest the Vietnam war. On May 18, 1970 National Guardsmen at Kent State fired into a group of students who had been hurling insults and rocks at them. Four students were killed and eight wounded. In 1969 there had been over 2,000 bomb scares in New York City alone. Eight bombings, of such capitalist institutions as the RCA Building, Rockefeller Centre, the General Motors Building and the Chase Manhattan Bank, actually took place, the Weather Underground and other radical left wing groups claiming responsibility. The Civil Rights movement had also turned bloody. 28 Black Panthers had been killed in the last two years in shoot-outs with police.

"Everybody was fighting against the violence," Peckinpah later observed, "fighting against this, fighting against that. Everybody had it in them." He had recently read two books by a playwright and self-taught anthropologist, Robert Ardrey: *African Genesis* and *The Territorial Imperative*. Marshalling an impressive array of evidence gathered by palaeontologists, biologists and anthropologists, Ardrey argued that man's voracious appetite for violence was caused entirely by powerful instinctual drives. Man was a carnivore, a murderous ape who had learned over centuries to fashion ever more sophisticated weaponry with which he bludgeoned and hacked his way to the top of the food chain, a killer with a natural love of slaughter and an instinctual impulse to fight for the control of territory, for himself, his family, his tribe, his nation.

Pandora's box

Peckinpah went to work on Goodman's script, scribbling new action and dialogue in the margins and on the backs of pages. Some of the scenes sprang forth fully formed and would survive barely altered in the finished film; others would go through rewrite after rewrite.

Peckinpah shifted his protagonist's inner conflict from that of a worn-out liberal struggling to overcome a sense of moral impotency to that of an apolitical intellectual who struggles to repress his passions, in particular his incredible rage, which he tries desperately to hide from others and himself. He grounded that rage not only in hidden primitive instincts, but also in the accumulated resentments of a bad marriage.

He eliminated the couple's daughter and made them both younger. Amy, the wife, would now be barely 20 and beautiful – a native of the village who had gone to college in America. The script implied that she had been the professor's student there and married him in the heat of a mad crush. Now she's brought him back with her to England and the bloom is fading quickly off the rose. When the couple make love or express affection in Peckinpah's rewritten scenes, it is with the flirtatiousness of highschool kids. The interaction is charming at first, but as it keeps

recurring the lack of depth builds a disquieting tension. The young professor, David Sumner, tries to contain the relationship emotionally, to keep it within a safe compartment that will fit neatly into his labelled and filed life. Yet subconsciously he senses the shallowness of his marriage and resents it, even though he is the one who set it up. Again and again he sticks blades of sarcasm into Amy, subtly ridiculing her for her lack of intellect.

For her part, Amy is stung by David's patronising attitude and craves attention, her only source of self esteem. When she doesn't get it she finds manipulative ways of striking back at her husband. She sneaks into his study when he is absent and alters the convoluted equation on his blackboard, changing a plus sign to a minus. Several wasted hours later he will discover her little 'joke'. She walks outside to where the burly workmen from the local village are erecting a garage for them and begins flirting, knowing that David is watching from inside the house.

Her flirtations open a Pandora's box. Already envious of the American because of his money and his beautiful wife, the workmen begin first subtly then not so subtly to taunt and humiliate him. Then one night David finds their pet cat strangled. Amy claims the villagers did it to prove they could get into his bedroom and presses David to confront them, but he refuses. "Listen, I'm not going to accuse them," he protests. Instead he tries to win their friendship. They appear to warm to him and invite him to go hunting the next day.

Following Charlie Venner, Norman Scutt and the other villagers into the woods, Sumner is handed a shotgun seemingly longer and heavier than he is and shown how to load it. He handles it awkwardly and the others snicker, but as Peckinpah notes on one script, "He grins with them, just happy to be part of it." They take him to a forest meadow and leave him there, literally holding the bag, telling him they will drive the birds to him. "We'll be spread about – if'n need us, call," says one. David nods resolutely, determined to earn his place among men, "I'll be here."

Then, of course, they ditch him. David waits for hours before realising he's been had. Meanwhile back at the farm house, Amy's former lover Venner arrives at the front door. He invites himself in, there is some bittersweet banter about the old days, then he forces himself on her. She resists, he slaps her around, she gives in, reluctantly at first, then passionately – all the pent up frustrations, anger and unmet needs of her soured marriage released in a frenzied coupling. It starts out as a rape scene, turns into a sad and tender love scene, then veers hideously back into rape when Scutt shows up, shotgun in hand. Venner's loyalties shift in an instant from his old girlfriend, to his tribal comrade. He helps hold Amy down while Scutt brutally rapes her.

The story comes to a climax when Sumner

"Everybody was fighting against the violence... Everybody had it in them"

accidentally hits the village idiot, Henry Niles, while driving home one foggy evening. The simpleton is cut up and bruised, but not seriously hurt. David takes him home and calls the town pub. Unbeknown to him, Niles had accidentally strangled a young girl from the village earlier that evening, and now the villagers are looking for her and also Niles, who had been seen walking away from a church social with her.

Primitive motivation

Sumner's phone call alerts them to the retarded man's whereabouts, and soon a group of drunken vigilantes, among them Venner and Scutt, are pounding on the door of the isolated farmhouse, demanding that Niles be handed over. Sumner refuses to give him up to a mob: "They'll beat him to death," he explains to Amy. His stand begins on solid principles, but soon more primitive instincts take over. "This is my house This is where I live! This is mine! Me! I will not allow violence against my house!" And as the battle escalates, David Sumner descends into a murderous rage far more frightening and effective than that of all of his attackers combined.

"Violence usually begins with a reason, with some principle to be defended," Peckinpah told one interviewer. "The real motivation, however, is a primitive thirst for blood, and as the fighting continues reasons or principles are forgotten and men fight for the sake of fighting." But clearly David's pump has been primed by disillusionment and despair, and whatever fantasies he still harbours about saving his marriage are shattered when in the middle of the siege Amy attempts to abandon him for Venner.

It's the moment where David Sumner has his blindfold pulled off, when he finally sees Amy and his marriage for what they really are. "In marriage so often," Peckinpah later said, "especially if the man is lonely, he will clothe her [his wife] in the vestments of his own needs – and if she's very young she'll do the same thing to him. They don't really look at what the other person is, but at what they want that person to be. All of a sudden the illusion wears off and they really see each other."

It's this intolerable realisation that causes Sumner to explode. Afterwards, his living room littered with bodies, he exclaims with elation, "Jesus Christ, I got them all!" By perfecting his skills as a killer and smothering his more vulnerable emotions, Sumner has passed a bloody rite through to manhood. But at what cost?

When the finished film hit the cinemas more than a year later, many critics attacked it as a fascist celebration of the joys of combat, though as many defended it as an anti-violence statement that cautions us against our own innate savagery. Peckinpah himself switched from one interpretation to the other from interview to interview, sometimes seeming to embrace both in the same interview, and even in the same breath. As he said to William Murray of *Playboy*: "True pacifism is manly. In fact, it's the finest form of manliness. But if a man comes up to you and cuts your hand off, you don't offer him the other one. Not if you want to go on playing the piano, you don't. I'm not saying that violence is what makes a man a man. I am saying when violence comes you can't run from it. You have to recognise its true nature in yourself as well as in others and stand up to it. If you run, you're dead, or you ought to be."

Sumner, Peckinpah seems to be saying, is hor-

rifying yet admirable, both a hero and a villain. This dichotomy was to be the heart of the film. It was no simplistic statement about violence being 'good' or 'bad'. Instead Peckinpah would use the story as a vehicle for probing his own profound ambivalence about violence. "Why," he would ask his audience and himself, "do we hunger to see such bloody tales? Why are our heroes all killers? What does this say about us?"

It remains a film without answers, for Peckinpah himself had none. "I always thought that what he was doing was putting things on film that he did not understand," says screenwriter and director Gill Dennis, who married Peckinpah's daughter Kristen. "You know? I thought he was saying, 'Here, look at this. How does this fit into your scheme of things?'"

Peckinpah turned in his first draft of the screenplay in late August of 1970. Baum and Melnick loved it, though it continued to be rewritten for the next four months, with Peckinpah, Goodman, Melnick and Dustin Hoffman all contributing. During that process, Peckinpah came up with a new title based on an enigmatic passage from *The Book of 5,000 Characters* by the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu: "Heaven and Earth are ruthless, and treat the myriad of creatures as straw dogs: the sage is ruthless and treats the people as straw dogs... Is not the space between Heaven and Earth like a bellows?" Peckinpah explained in a memo to Baum, "In the *T'ien Yun in the Chuang Tzu* it is said that straw dogs were treated with the greatest deference before they were used as an offering, only to be discarded and trampled upon as soon as they served their purpose."

The studio head couldn't make head nor tail of this Chinese mumbo-jumbo, but the new title had an intriguing ring to it, and he approved it.

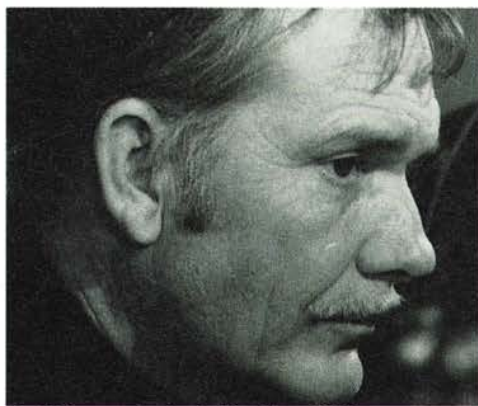
Hoffman and George

Hoffman was cast as Sumner, Susan George as Amy, Peter Vaughan, Del Henney and Ken Hutchison as the leading villagers. On 22 January, the cast and crew travelled to the rolling countryside of the Cornish peninsula. Here all of the exteriors for the picture would be shot in the village of St. Buryan, with a nearby farmhouse serving as the Sumner residence. Hoffman and George spent days wandering around the village doing Actor's Studio-style improvisations to develop a relationship to parallel the characters in the film. Goodman followed them, scribbling down their exchanges, some of which were incorporated into the film.

For the villagers who lay siege to the farmhouse, Peckinpah orchestrated slightly less genteel 'improvisations' to get them into character, namely a series of drunken parties that often ended in brawls (T. P. McKenna broke his arm at one of these improvs and was forced to wear it in a sling throughout the shoot). Hutchison responded to this approach with great gusto, and one 'Indian Wrestling' match between the young actor and his director left both with swollen and bleeding faces. Peckinpah threw an affectionate arm around Hutchison after they'd fought to a draw, dubbing him his "Dog Brother".

"It was all very calculated on Peckinpah's part," says Hutchison. "He was setting the tone for the movie and our characters. It was a very dark, violent piece. I mean, we weren't making *Mary Poppins*."

Susan George puts it this way: "There was a definite self-destruct mechanism in Sam, no



Bloody Sam: was director Peckinpah a pacifist?

question about it. But he found his match on that movie in Ken Hutchison. Ken was his soul mate. Ken was as stupid at times and as volatile and as frightening as Sam was. Hoffman and I came back to the hotel one night after being out together all day and this fight was going on in the middle of the dining hall. I thought: 'Oh God, no, not another one! Because we were always coming back to these barroom brawls.' I said to Sam, 'Oh, please, don't do it! Please, don't be so stupid!' And it was going on and on, until eventually they smashed into some glasses on a table and Ken cut his arm. I had to take Ken to the hospital. But I was always the one who could talk to Sam when this was going on. When he hurt Ken I was furious with him. I stopped them from fighting. It troubled me greatly. Sam would listen to me, he hated to hurt me. He treated me as if he was my boyfriend and my father."

By the time they started shooting the exterior night scenes of the siege at the farmhouse on March 1, they were in high gear. Peckinpah was in his element. "It was a very hard shoot, physically," says Vaughan. "There was a lot of camaraderie between the whole unit and Sam. It was a very happy but hard shoot. The hours were long, it was cold, we had a lot of night shooting. The roles were quite demanding, physically - breaking up the house, firing guns, getting my foot shot off. Sam would say, 'Go through there!' And you went through the window. The fact that the curtains were on fire didn't make any difference, if Sam said you go, you go. We actually did break that farmhouse apart, it was an extremely violent couple of nights work. It moved very fast, Sam shot with great speed. It was an extraordinary thing to do, from the acting point of view. We were really hyped up. You just don't stroll casually through a window which was on fire. There were stunt men, but the definition of what a stunt man does and what an actor does gets a little blurred when these things get exciting."

The real fireworks, however, came when the company returned to London to shoot the interiors, and the rape sequence.

"About this scene..."

"I dreaded that rape scene," says George. "Sam kept saying he was going to shoot the greatest rape scene ever put on film. He went on and on about it and he'd be very visual in his descriptions of the things he was expecting, physical things that he was going to film. He kept talking about it and it was getting bigger and bigger in my mind, quite out of proportion. It had started out as a small scene and now it was becoming a trilogy, and I was getting scared."

Finally she went to Melnick and said, "Look, I need to sit down with someone and talk about this. I want to know, on paper, what we're expecting of me in this scene, I really do! Because I'm not sure what Sam's expecting, it's getting larger by the day. I'm not sure if it's just me thinking it or whether it's him thinking it. So I need to get a few things straight."

Melnick smiled warmly, patted her on the shoulder, and cooed in his FM disc jockey voice, "I think the best thing for you to do is sit down with Sam and talk to him about it."

So she went to see him one day after shooting, in his office. As usual he was throwing knives. He hurled three of them into the wooden door not two feet from her head. "Are you finished?" she asked, lips drawn tight around her teeth.

"Yeah, sit down, kid."

She took a seat opposite his. "Look, I want to talk about the rape scene."

"What do you want to talk about?"

She shifted uncomfortably in her chair. "I really need to talk about it, exactly what we're going to do."

"What do you mean, what we're going to do? What, do you want it written down?"

"Yes, actually, I would love it written down. I know that sounds funny, Sam, but I would love it written down. Then I could take it home and go over it and make perfectly sure that I can do all the things that you require me to do."

"I'm not writing it down."

"But if you don't write it down and I don't know what you're expecting, it's becoming an insurmountable problem for me and it's bothering me. If we could talk about it from A to Z I'd be really thrilled."

He leaned forward. "Listen to me when you took this picture, did you or did you not agree to do this rape scene?"

"Yes, I did."

"You said you'd do it."

"Yes, I did, but I lied."

"You what?"

"I lied. I lied because I wanted to get the role and the rape scene was in the picture, and now I'm not sure if I can do it."

Suddenly he was on his feet; a knife flew, quivering into the woodpanelled wall. "What do you mean you don't think you can do it?"

"I just don't think I can do it."

"Well, you'll have to do it! I'm gonna make you do it!"

She was trembling as she rose to her feet as well. "All right, Sam, find yourself another Amy." Then she stormed out of his office and ran across the parking lot in floods of tears. Melnick appeared, as if popping up out of the asphalt, and stopped her. "What happened, what happened, what happened? Have you spoken to Sam about the scene?"

"Yes, and I've just walked off the picture."

"You what?"

"I've walked off the picture."

"Don't be ridiculous. That's ridiculous, child, you can't do this! Go back and see Sam."

"I'm not going back into that room, he's positively livid with me. He's ranting and raving and screaming and throwing bowie knives. I'm not going back up there. I've just told him to find himself another Amy."

"You can't do this. You'll be sued by the production company, your career will go down the tubes!"

◀ She walked anyway. The next day Melnick made several frantic phone calls to the actress and her agent, John Redway, who finally coaxed George into another meeting with Peckinpah. "I was terrified," she says. "I walked into Sam's office and he was very quiet, very cold."

"You want to see me?"

"Yes, I do. I need to see you because I think this is silly really, because I've walked off the picture and I don't think you want me to walk off, and it's all because I'm frightened. You won't help me with that fear that I have, and I'm only asking you to tell me what you want to do. That will help me not to be so frightened."

Peckinpah's face thawed a few degrees. "All right, I'll tell you what I want to shoot."

"He wrote down everything on a piece of paper," says George, "and it was awful, horrendous! I wish he hadn't written it down. It was ghastly, worse on paper than when he'd told me about it."

"I can't do that," she said, "I just can't do these things."

"Well, how else do you propose to show me these emotions?"

"Well, I propose to do it through my eyes. If I'm the kind of actress that you think I am, and the kind of person that you think I am, I think I can tell you everything with my eyes. If you focus on my eyes and my body movements, I promise you I will lead you down the road you wish to be led down. I will make you believe every bloody moment of it."

She could see the gears whirring behind his eyes. The sequence was very important to him, she knew that. "I want to shoot the best rape scene that's ever been shot," he said again.

"You will! And I will do it for you. If you let me do it my way, I can give you the most provocative, beautiful and telling rape scene you'll ever see! I can pull it off without showing pubic hair. I know I can."

He thought for a moment longer, then his face relaxed. "Okay, I'll make a deal with you. I'll do it your way, and if when we've done it your way I'm not satisfied then we have to do some things my way."

"I understand."

They had a deal.

"To be more humane"

"So we shot it," says George. "For a week we shot the rape scene. On the first day I arrived absolutely petrified. Sam came in to work that day, and he sat with his legs crossed, in a little ball on the floor in front of the couch where I was raped, and he never moved and he never said a word to me for five days. He did talk to Del Henney and gave him a terribly hard time. He started saying things like what a dreadful lover he was. He provoked Del terribly, but he never said a word to me. When Del was on top of me he would say things like, 'Christ almighty! Is this it?' It was really unbelievable. I used to try not to listen to that, but he never said one word to me, just smiled at me from time to time. And he did what I begged him to do, which was focus on my eyes and upper body and let me tell the story. Sam was so volatile and lethal on the one hand, and so quiet and kind and loving on the other, that's what was fascinating about him."

"It was a difficult scene to shoot," says Del Henney. "It was rather harrowing, actually. But you just have to do it. Susan was terribly nervous

about it at first. She was scared Sam was going to shoot some porn. But there was no way the camera operator would shoot porn. I said to her, 'Look, we've just got to get into it and do it.' And Sam was very good about it. He cleared the set, except for the few of us that needed to be there. He didn't insist on us stripping off all our clothes, just what we had to for the camera. Halfway into it it turns into a sort of love scene, a tender scene. There were two forces working in the character I was playing, one pushing him forward, the other pulling him back. The one was pushing him to transcend his background, to be more humane. He was brighter than the others, but the peer pressure from his mates pulled him back. That's why he ends up holding Amy down so Scutt can rape her."

"After we finished it Sam wouldn't let me go into see the rushes," says George. "He had let me see rushes throughout shooting, but now he refused to let me in. He went to rushes alone and I went home and fretted all weekend, wondering what the consequences were going to be, whether I'd managed to pull it off or not, and just how angry he was going to be if I hadn't. I wasn't shooting that Monday, but I went in anyway at about 11 am."

"Sam had just been to see rushes. I caught him coming out of the screening room and thought: 'Christ! What do I do, turn and run? Get out of the way, get back in the car, what do I do?' I was standing there and he walked all the way across the tarmac, stony-faced, and when he got right up close to me he put his hand out and said, 'You've got a deal, kid.' And he held my hand, and that was the conclusion of the rape scene."

She had captured Amy in all her conflicted, tortured passion. It was a stunning performance, easily matching Hoffman's finest moments in the picture. When Peckinpah was through cutting it, it would become one of the most perversely erotic sequences in the history of cinema.

"My character started out strong and by the end of the movie she's completely stripped, emotionally," says George. "When I shot that scene with Del Henney, Dustin Hoffman came to the studio that day. He didn't come on the set, he just came to the studio and knew it was going on inside the sound stage. And the next day he treated me as if I'd been unfaithful to him. And after that, this relationship between he and I, which had been fabulous up until then, deteriorated. It was as if I'd hurt him. I was absolutely distraught because by the end of the movie Hoffman had really cut himself off from me and become terribly distant. From a very kind and humorous and loving friendship, he had become extremely aloof. I was really hurt. I didn't see him again for years and year and years. Mind games, incredible mind games, coming from both Dustin and Sam. But that's the way they worked, and I believe to this day and always will that Peckinpah was a genius, likewise Hoffman, so I was

"After we finished it Sam wouldn't let me see the rushes," says Susan George

willing to take everything they had to give."

Straw Dogs finished its 66th and final day of photography on April 29, 1971 five days over schedule. Peckinpah had shot 261,195 feet of film, only a little above average for a feature at that time. But the footage was broken into a staggering number of set-ups, and Peckinpah printed almost all of it. To carve the raw footage into a finished film, Peckinpah hired a stable of editors – Tony Lawson, Paul Davies, Roger Spottiswoode and Bob Wolfe – and walked from editing room to editing room to supervise their work on the various sequences.

"What Sam was very good at was finding links from one scene to another, or one element to another," says Tony Lawson. "He'd say, 'Hey, you know, we could link this with that, we could join those two things together.' He could take completely unrelated events, cut them together, and make them seem like one. He was very imaginative in that way, he was good in engineering that, he could see a way to do it."

Cheering the brutality

One of the most compelling links that Peckinpah established in the editing of *Straw Dogs* was that between sex and violence. Almost every erotic interaction is connected to some act of brutality or impending danger so that any expression of sexuality carries with it a sense of terrible foreboding. Early in the film, when David and Amy begin to make love in their bedroom, Peckinpah cuts to Scutt at the village pub pulling out a pair of Amy's panties stolen from that very bedroom and waves them at Charlie Venner – like a matador fluttering his cape at a bull. Peckinpah then jumpcuts to the next day in David's study. He and Amy are in the midst of a confrontation. She has intentionally interrupted his work again. "Don't play games with me," he warns. Thus David, Amy, Venner and Scutt have all been linked as participants in a deadly game that will have horrible consequences for each.

In the rape that follows, Venner's penetration of Amy is crosscut with David in the woods as he finally manages to shoot a pheasant. David slowly approaches the fallen bird. It flutters spasmodically in a bush, then dies. He picks up its corpse, fingering the now limp head, then remorsefully places the bird back in the bush and attempts to scrub its viscous blood from his palm. Later, at the church social, Janice Hedden leads Henry Niles off to a caretaker's shack in the nearby graveyard and tries to seduce him. This is intercut with Tom Hedden back at the church hall. He has just learned of his daughter's disappearance with the half-wit. "Dad, it's Janice!" the girl's brother Bobby reports, eager to incite the old man's ferocity. "She made off to the yard, and she went walking with Henry Niles! He was holding her, Dad, touching her!" Tom Hedden finds Henry's brother John, pulls him out into the vestibule and beats him bloody with young Bobby egging him on. "Holding her, he was! Touching her! Had his hands all over her!"

Niles' accidental killing of Janice is then crosscut with the candle-lit ceremony led by the Reverend Hood inside the church. "As these lights are extinguished before our eyes," Hood intones solemnly, "so may your souls be put in the presence of God, the Blessed Virgin, and all the saints, and handed over to the Devil and his angels to be punished with fire, world without end, unless you repent. Amen." But the priest's incantations

are powerless to stop Hedden in the vestibule, or Henry and Janice in the caretaker's shack, or to reverse the forces that will soon converge so apocalyptically at the Sumner farm house.

The film had its first public preview at the North Point Theatre in San Francisco in the autumn of 1971. "We had no idea how powerful it was because we never showed it to anybody, and we'd become desensitised to it," says Roger Spottiswoode. A third of the audience walked out before the picture ended, yelling comments like "This is obscene!" Many who remained cheered Dustin Hoffman on to each escalating act of brutality. "There was this blood thirst that was horrifying," says one member of the production team who was present. "I think we were all shocked to have provoked that, we had no idea it would have such a visceral effect on an audience."

But it was more than the graphic violence that caused the upheaval. There were several films before *Straw Dogs* and hundreds after it that spewed more blood and gore. It is the film's emotional undercurrents and relentless fascination with the dynamics of human aggression that make it powerfully disturbing even today, 20 years after its release.

"Sam's preoccupation with the mechanics of violence is a very hard thing to marry with his professed hate and horror of violence," says Tony Lawson, "and I must say I've never been able to sort that out in my own mind even – whether he really was a pacifist and wished to stop us from killing each other, or whether he was fascinated and obsessed by it for some other reason. I think he could never verbalise his feelings about it. I suspect he said he was against violence because he had to say something. Maybe he just couldn't put it into words in any other way, maybe it was much more complex than that, maybe it was much darker than that, maybe it had much more guilt attached to it than that. But he had to nevertheless say something because he obviously did feel very strongly about it."

Straw Dogs was screened for the MPAA in early October, and to no one's surprise the Association's rating board hit the roof. The rape sequence included a series of shots that showed Hutchison sodomising Susan George while Henney held her down. The shots were raw enough to cause even the ABC brass to blench, but Peckinpah had insisted on keeping them in. Now the MPAA threatened an X-rating if they were not removed. Peckinpah finally had no choice but to comply. The footage amounted to less than a minute of screen time, but its deletion had a significant effect on the sequence.

In a New York Times article that attacked the MPAA's rating system, Stephen Farber used *Straw Dogs* as a classic example of the agency's prudish ineptitude. "The second rape, a sodomistic rape, was almost completely eliminated. Some critics have complained that the version in release expresses a male chauvinist fantasy, implying that women want to be overpowered and brutalised. Peckinpah's original version meant to contrast Susan George's responses to the two rapes. The second rape was as frightening and revolting as the first was erotic. The scene as originally shot implicated us and made us confront our own responses to violence. Interestingly, it was the rating board, not Sam Peckinpah, that was responsible for the re-enforcing of sexist fantasy. In shearing the scene, the board said in effect that a rape enjoyed by a woman can be



Blood brothers: Dustin Hoffman and Ken Hutchison

seen by children, but a rape that truly violates and humiliates her cannot appear on the screen."

The British Board of Film Censors took a much more liberal attitude, and allowed *Straw Dogs* to be shown in England without any deletions. Stephen Murphy, a member of the Board, sent a note to Melnick afterwards: "I have been meaning to write to you for days. I have seen the whole film twice, parts of it three times, and it still makes me tremble about the knees. Its reception here by the examiners was really quite something. The examiners who were not on duty turned up voluntarily to see it, and they were absolutely unanimous in their view that this is really an outstanding picture. I wish you all the luck in the world with it."

Critics enraged

In America, the movie incited even more polarised reviews than *The Wild Bunch* had. *Time* and *Newsweek* pronounced the film brilliant; *The Atlantic*, *Variety*, *The New York Times*, *Life*, and *The New Yorker* denounced it as depraved, misogynistic and fascist.

But the reaction of American critics was positively glowing compared to the reception that the film got in Britain. The critics in Britain had always been big Peckinpah fans, praising even uneven efforts like *Major Dundee* (1964), which American reviewers had clubbed. When it was safely framed within the mythic landscape of the American West, they found Peckinpah's exploration of man's animalism powerful and profound. When he pursued the same theme in the English countryside, the critics did an about-face. *Straw Dogs* was attacked for its "cardboard" characterisations of English villagers, its degradation of women, and its depraved celebration of violence. London critics were so enraged that 13 of them wrote to *The London Times* to condemn *Straw Dogs* as "dubious in its intention and excessive in its effect". A month later many of these same critics would be praising Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* – a film which also examined the dynamics of violence, but placed its action in a mythical future society, and took a cool and ironic point of view that allowed the audience to remain at a safe distance from the events taking place on the screen.

However, one English writer, Charles Barr, noticed the sharp contrast in reactions to the two films, and perceptively dismantled the attacks on *Straw Dogs*. Barr noted that Peckinpah and Kubrick were completely opposed in style. Kubrick used wide-angle lenses to keep an almost clinical distance from *Clockwork's* mayhem, whereas Peckinpah used telephoto lenses, close-

ups and rapid cutting to suck the audience into his film's emotional turbulence. In one movie you watched and reflected on the characters' actions, in the other you experienced the events with them.

The profoundly disturbing emotions that *Straw Dogs* stirred up – Barr argued – provoked an irrational response in normally level-headed critics. He cited several reviews that wildly exaggerated the film's violence, describing carnage that took place not on the screen, but only in the critics' reeling psyches. "What the critics seem to fear is contamination," Barr wrote. "A director is involved: if we respond, we become involved too. The violence is a vampire bite." In America, William S. Pechter noticed the different responses to *Orange* and *Dogs*, and wrote in *Commentary*: "Surely, whatever his conscious attitudes toward the violence of his films, no one can stage scenes of violence with the kind of controlled frenzy Peckinpah brings to them without being susceptible to the frenzy despite his controlling it; without in some sense enjoying what he does, and it is this investment of himself, an attempted exorcism of his devils in his work, perhaps even more than his filmmaking genius, that makes Peckinpah at once so hard to take and so impossible to turn away from. Kubrick coldly lectures us that we are living in a hell of our own making, Peckinpah writhes in the flames with us, burning."

Peckinpah's tortured inquiries into the dynamics of violence failed to purge it from the cinema, or the real world – the body counts in both have skyrocketed in the two decades since he completed *The Wild Bunch* and *Straw Dogs*. Censors may prevent modern audiences from seeing the complete versions of those films, but the technical innovations they employed to shock audiences 20 years ago are now part of the common vocabulary of action pictures. Instead of going through a soul searching crisis after seeing Peckinpah's pictures, audiences instead developed higher tolerance levels and an appetite for yet more graphic kill feasts.

"I was wrong"

No one was more keenly aware of the dark irony of this than Peckinpah himself. In an interview with the BBC in 1983, Sam said, "I believed in the Greek theory of catharsis – that by experiencing grief, pity and fear in a theatrical context we could purge this poison from our systems... I was wrong."

During the filming of *The Osterman Weekend*, Peckinpah battled with his producers to take violent sequences out of the film, and in his last days told colleagues that he was looking for an "upbeat", "life affirming" project to direct. The last films he directed were two short rock videos for Julian Lennon. They were restrained, lyrical, contemplative, and beautifully crafted – the kind of work Peckinpah's detractors claimed he was incapable of.

But were *The Wild Bunch* and *Straw Dogs* really failures? We'll never know how many minds were altered for the better in darkened movie theatres by Peckinpah's burning psychodramas; how many were forced to look within themselves and decided they didn't like what they saw and were forever changed because of it. I would like to count myself as one.

'Straw Dogs' is at the National Film Theatre from 3 to 7 February, and then tours nationally

WOMEN CAN ONLY MISBEHAVE

Looking at 'Straw Dogs' in the light of feminism, Susan George's 'perverse' Amy emerges from the margins. By Linda Ruth Williams

Sam Peckinpah's 1971 film has long been notorious for its emphasis on the redeeming power of masculine violence, as its initially mild hero David (Dustin Hoffman) discovers his true self only through a savage baptism of murderous self-defence. Castigated even by liberal critics of the day for its infamous rape sequence as well as the bloodbath of its finale, this is a film which overtly places a particular brand of masculinity centre-stage. But perhaps the film's resonant and most troubling image lies elsewhere.

The plot of the film is spare enough. David and his wife Amy (Susan George) have come to her native Cornwall so that he can write his book in peace. An American mathematics professor, intellectual, cowardly, he is the film's stranger in a strange land. Amy is the returning native: the film is played out not only in the wild Celtic fringe of *The Wicker Man* (1973) or even *An American Werewolf in London* (1981) (the pub in *Straw Dogs* being the architectural and atmospheric ancestor of *The Slaughtered Lamb* in the Yorkshire of Landis' film, made ten years later), but a bloody version of Hardy's Wessex. But even if David is the outsider from the New World and Amy is the returning native it is nevertheless the villagers who are the true 'strangers' of the film. A British take on the interbred backwoodsmen of Americana, these yokels differ from their state-side cousins in that they do have a voice. Whilst the film develops into a conflict between these two sides (with Amy increasingly lying in between), David's is crucially not a privileged view. This is not a film which treats its country-folk entirely as the 'other', nasty though they might be. A number of scenes are played out on their terms, with David and Amy absent, in the time-honoured tradition of realist story-telling – an approach which also accords with Peckinpah's wider interest in the world seen from the outsider's point of view.

David and Amy have returned to Amy's old home on the fringes of the village, which is also partly inhabited by the motley group of labourers they have hired to renovate the out-buildings. Much of *Straw Dogs* concerns the growing tension between David and these men, the usual range of country types, from the drunken and feckless to the positively carnivalesque (Chris the rat-catcher occupies himself during the final show-down by circling the action on a child's musical bicycle, wearing a comic nose, whooping and gig-

gling). The key figure in this group is the sexually threatening Charlie Venner (Del Henney) who, we are told, once "took care of" Amy when she lived in the village. The unspoken menace posed by the labourers intensifies, systematically undermining David's tenuous position as master of his castle, and of his own wife, who increasingly aligns herself with the other men, often voicing their point of view. ("They just think you're strange," she says to him early in the film.)

As the uneasy tension between David and the men turns into blatant enmity, so David's and Amy's marriage begins to crumble. The cat is discovered hanged in their wardrobe, an act carried out (as Amy says to David) "To prove to you that they can get into your bedroom." When David does nothing, the bedroom is violated further. Luring the unsuspecting husband out on a ludicrous shooting trip, Charlie gets his chance to catch Amy alone and to cuckold David. Amy is raped, in a scene dense with outrageous implications. Here we see the first instance of characteristically-Peckinpah slow-motion violence in the film, when Amy recoils from Charlie's hand as he beats her up before the rape which is extensively indulged. Like the caveman that David isn't, Charlie even drags Amy to the couch by her hair. All the time she screams "No, no, no," as her actions are saying "Yes, yes, yes" – fear is turned into arousal. It's an image of the complicit rape victim that's as old as misogyny, here all the more astonishing for the audacity and clarity with which it is represented. She doesn't know what she wants, so he's going to give her what's good for her. An act which starts as rape ends as lovemaking, and Amy's orgasmic expressions and grateful tears are viewed and heard largely from the point of view of the rapist. If this isn't shocking enough, what follows takes the whole scene one step further. As Amy lies face-down in post-coital reverie, she is penetrated by a second man, in an act which looks like sodomy. This she resists fully, both because it isn't her old flame Charlie, and because she is in genuine pain throughout. The second scene is incredibly disturbing, not only because of what it is in itself, but also because of what it implies about the earlier act. If this is 'bad' rape, then the first rape must have been 'good'. In the *Straw Dogs* discourse, rape is not necessarily negative – it all depends on who's doing it to you.

We then move on to multiple-murder, as David finally takes matters into his own hands. The mob lay siege to the house, because David – in the name of justice and democracy – harbours the village idiot Henry Niles (David Warner) who has killed local girl Janice (Sally Thomsett), accidentally dispatching her in the manner of Boris Karloff as Frankenstein's monster, because he does not know his own strength. The villagers try to force entry but David resists. As he evolves from wimp to macho-superhero, the turning-point in his story comes when he battens down the hatches and proclaims, "This is my house." Finally he orders his wayward wife to "Stay there and do as you're told – if you don't I'll break your neck." An American's Cornish home finally becomes his castle, and the peaceful academic turns feudal defender, pouring boiling oil through the windows and deploying a man-trap on Charlie to grotesque effect, to the blaring and jarring strains of the bagpipes.

So this is a film with a principle and a fear of invasion at its heart, in the issues with which it

deals (rape, siege, lack of privacy – the workers are somehow *always there*, *always watching*), and in the way it is visually constructed. There are recurrent shots of David and of Amy, as the film's principal exotic spectacle, being seen, through windows, doors, from overhead by the men sitting on the roof. Amy puts on a show for her audience, walking naked past windows knowing that eyes will peer through them, kissing David passionately for as long as she sees that they are being seen. If this is a woman who is 'asking for it' (David says to her "Why don't you wear a bra? You shouldn't go around without one and not expect that type to stare"), it's surely just as significant that this is a house with holes in its walls. We first see David and Amy in the village, then driving home. Amy enters the house as Chris the rat-catcher leaves (bearing, as we later discover, a pair of Amy's knickers): that's to say, he is inside before ever they are. And somewhat less threateningly, Janice, with a crush on David, watches the mirror-image of the couple's love-making as she sits in a tree outside the window.

The fact that the workers are there at all means that David's and Amy's relationship is enacted almost entirely in the public realm. David does not do-it-himself, so other men have to do it for him (as Amy inimitably puts it, "If you could hammer a nail" they – meaning she – wouldn't need to call on the men from the village). From one point of view, the drama plays out – writ large – the bourgeois fear of workers getting too close: the film's horrendous *dénouement* builds up from an unease which is little more than the homeowner's fear of his builder. Their house is not their own, they are invaded: the hellish tenant of *Pacific Heights* (1990) is crossed with the inbred Celts of *The Wicker Man* (1973) to produce the murderous labourers of *Straw Dogs*. But involved in this notion that those 'downstairs' are starting to unsettle those 'upstairs' simply by *being there* is also a sense that those 'downstairs' *know* more about your home and your wife than you do, and are settling in to take both back. Some of the most troubling early moments focus on David's sense of being overrun by his own employees, as they look in through windows, come into rooms they shouldn't, refuse to leave – and worse. Whilst this is in *many* ways a deeply conservative film, its appeal is partly bound up with these most banally conservative of feelings, fired up by a thousand dinner-party stories of the builder from hell. But between these classic battle-lines is Amy, the returning native occupying a middle-ground between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the outside and the inside, looking at the old world with the eyes of the new, and the new with the old.

24 years on, and with the whole legacy of 70s and 80s feminism in mind, what else is at stake in this film? How should we now read Amy, this extraordinary image of a wayward will in a body which men's eyes can only "lick" (as is once said in the film), possessed by an obdurate inability to behave as she ought? Certainly not as a straightforward feminist heroine. Yet in a film which clearly tries to condense its conflicts (after a tremendous build-up of tension and awful anticipation of the worst) into a simple affair of men from different sides of the tracks and the Atlantic battling it out, femininity remains a problem, an irresolute and difficult form of unpredictability, a perverse moment of disobedience. In *Straw Dogs*, it seems, femininity is perversity, and

women can only misbehave.

Amy misbehaves from the first images of her, but the film as a whole opens in an extraordinary way. Out-of-focus and behind the credits, some children play in a graveyard, which seems to be positioned at the centre of their remote Cornish village in place of a village green. Quite apart from its content, what is unsettling about this scene-setting is how we are made to 'see' something before we know what it is that we're seeing (for we only understand what this image is when the shot finally pulls into focus). After this comes a view of Amy's breasts, the first transparently significant image of the film: her torso in medium close-up fills the screen, her bra-less, swinging breasts clearly visible under her jumper, her head entirely cut off by the frame. Neither her face nor her whole body are given us to help establish character, but rather so text-book an example of fragmented femininity that it seems almost parodic, the fragment of a woman preceding the whole. In many ways this is the establishing shot of Amy's role in the film, her bra-less-ness the totem of her role as the rape victim who's 'asking for it'. The camera pulls back to show her leading the way for two villagers, who are carrying for her a man-trap, a present for her husband. This suggests a number of things: that Amy is the man-trap, that the man-trap is the *vagina dentata* which must be subdued, that Amy employs someone 'lower' to carry it for her. "Where do we put it?" asks David when he sees it. "Anywhere you want," Amy replies. On the surface, *Straw Dogs* seems primarily concerned with David's failure, and his subsequent need to assert himself: but in fact these opening images of Amy set a different tone for the film.

Two models of femininity come together in her. Firstly, for all of the film's machismo, Amy is the prime focus for the virulent heterosexual desire of every man she meets, and thus the straightest thing we see. As so singular and unproblematic a sexual focus, she sets into relief the peculiarities of all those who desire her. Within the film, there certainly seems no such thing as an entirely straight male heterosexuality. Currents of homosocial and even bestial desire connect the village men: they work and play together, they even rape together, they sing songs about fucking sheep together. ("In a funny sort of way," says Chris, "I feel closer to rats than I do to people.") At the end of the film, the ostracised David drives off into the unknown paired with the murderous Henry, finding he has more in common with a male village idiot than his wife. By contrast, Amy is singularly focused, sexually. She is seldom seen in the company of other women, and only then when men are also present. The house is her father's. "Is that your daddy's chair?" asks David about one she's sitting in. "Every chair's my daddy's chair," she replies. She lives and breathes a masculine environment constructed first by her father and then by her husband, an environment which is being literally reconstructed and then destroyed by the men of the village as the film progresses.

But this straightness is carved from warped materials, reinforcing the notion that straight women are always already figures of perversity. The only other female we really get to know is Janice, an 'oversexed' young woman: as noted, she has already dabbled in voyeurism, and she meets her doom because she tries to 'initiate' Henry in the barn. Her abundance of female

desire is nevertheless offered up as the village's revered image of femininity, the defence of which prompts the final siege scene. If the ostensibly straight men are sometimes rather queer, the women's straightness has been pushed so far that it is beginning to implode. Amy too is abnormally normal, the current of straightness running through her matched by an unnerving disobedience: she is entirely identified with disruption. She is the coquettish child who married her teacher, and though it is not explicitly stated, David the college professor is positioned *in loco parentis* to Amy the nubile student; not so very unusual in itself, perhaps, but here pushed to the point of aberration (as is so much in this film). As David does calculations on a blackboard, Amy does her childish best to sabotage them, sitting in daddy's chair in David's room, chewing her gum. "You act like you're 14," says David, to which she replies, "I am," and intensifies her chewing. He encourages her further: "Wanna try for 12? How about eight - I freak out for eight-year-olds." At what point the relationship of two married adults might become paedophilia is somewhat unclear, but here the second is always made to seem implicit in the first.

These are not isolated examples of femininity as perversity. Every time Amy or Janice appear, their sexuality, excessive, disobedient, twisted, is foregrounded, through voyeurism, aggression, exhibitionism, paedophilia or generalised lusty waywardness. As the film's central image of 'normal' femininity Amy is always already corrupted. She refuses David's authority, but aligns herself nowhere else. She opens doors and invites danger in. She fails to stand by her man, yet even here she cannot be cast as a feminist heroine, for this failure is only one aspect of the way in which she hovers between active disobedience and feckless unreliability - she is even unreliable as to whether she will disobey. This is perhaps clearest in her double response to the double rape, as she embraces one, then tries to refuse the other. If *Straw Dogs* seems at first to rely on a simple model of heterosexual desire, the figure of Amy foregrounds the possibility that heterosexuality and femininity are seldom pure and never simple.

Amy's impulses position her between sides. Husband and wife are on the inside, the villagers without, but it is Amy who tries to open all the doors: "If you don't give them Niles I will," she says. "I told you I won't help you." David's battle with the enemy without is clear-cut; his battle with the enemy within anything but. As the camera darts from one side of the wall to the other, taking the part of both sides, the film is refusing,



Abnormal normality: Hoffman the professor, George the student

visually, to choose between one or the other, just like Amy. For all its rampant misogyny, this refusal means that, in a curious way, that it actually ends up on Amy's side (which is no 'side' at all). This is not simply a film which allows her to be leered at, humiliated, raped, and then drawn into the worst violence, although it does do all of these things. Nor is it a film which, after abusing its heroine, then celebrates with and through her the final act of brandishing the gun and using it (it is Amy who dispatches the last victim with a shot-gun): there is no identification with any victim-turned-victor. Instead, the whole is constructed around an ambiguous set of responses of which Amy is the prime focus, an ambiguity that is also cinematographic, present in the astonishing editing techniques, and in strange dialogue put into the mouths of several otherwise morally-grounded characters. The obdurate perversity of the project lies not merely in its characterisation of Amy, but in the way in which she functions as a crystallisation of the film's wild techniques and unsettling undecidability.

There is something horribly fascinating about the nihilism of all this. *Straw Dogs* goes far beyond the violent reverie of traditional exploitation cinema, protracted though the final showdown might be. It has become a commonplace to condemn, in the loosest terms, the violence in films that are perceived to fail to condemn that violence through some conclusive, overarching moral stance or resolution. Given the sense, also commonplace, that nothing moralises like a horror film, films which fail to condemn their own excesses must in some way seem rare. *Straw Dogs* neither condemns nor condones, ruling out the possibility of choice by offering its material in such a way that taking a stance seems entirely inappropriate. It sets up clearly demarcated lines of battle - David versus the rest - with obsessive clarity, for this is nothing if not a film about battle (one critic called it Peckinpah's "British Western"), but the kinds of choice this might imply, between black and white, between good college professors and bad country folk, between men and women, between democratic rights and the lynch mob, are rendered intractable.

Amy is the point of their breakdown. In a film about battle, Amy is the ultimate fifth columnist. She is between the battlelines, moving from little girl to traitor with dreadful inevitability. Two possible resolutions are offered - David's conclusive victory, and the world-turned-upside-down misrule of the yokels, kings for a day storming the Big House. The woman between these opponents supports neither and both. It is not that disobeying her husband, driving her car too fast or flaunting her body to all are in themselves acts of strength, but that the film, far from presenting them as fetishistic moments, colludes with them, especially in the way it presents everything else. There is an equivalence between David and his male enemies: in a strange way they are all on the same side, the side which assumes that individuals will in the end always defend their own and stand up for themselves. If David is the final focus of the film's sympathy, his cowardice combined with our insight into the position of the villagers (in certain scenes, when the camera looks from their point of view, they are generously represented) suggests other possible sympathies. At best, Amy sees both sides, the native who lives with David but gives voice to his enemies. At worst she fucks, disobeys, and betrays them all.

Zagreb video artists Breda Beban and Hrvoje Horvatic compare images from the classics with their own. Chris Darke introduces them

● Prior to 1985 – when they began working together in Zagreb – Breda Beban and Hrvoje Horvatic were each following individual artistic paths. Formally training as a painter, Beban had graduated in Zagreb in the late 1970s from the Academy of Fine Art. She begun bringing elements of performance into her work, and exploring Byzantine art and art theory. Hrvoje Horvatic had trained in Zagreb at the Academy of Film, Theatre and Television. Between 1979 and 1984, he made five 16mm films and then directed cinema and arts programmes for TV Zagreb. From *She, Four Things* (1986) to *All Our Secrets are Contained in an Image* (1987), their earliest collaborative single-screen works were short pieces, ranging between 11 and 25 minutes, centred on Beban's performances. Ever since the example of Vito Acconci and Bruce Nauman in the 1970s, video art and experimental film focussing on performance has tended to emphasise process, duration and repetition. This tendency survives, in less punishing and more self-consciously parodic ways, in such tapes as Cheryl Donegan's short, kinkily erotic *Head* (1993) and Douglas Gordon's *24 Hour Psycho* (1993), a 'remake' of the Hitchcock original projected in video blow-up in such slow motion that it lasts an entire day. But Beban and Horvatic resist such endurance tests, and have also disengaged themselves from all-purpose media critique, another defining tendency of video-art. Performance is in fact only one of several aesthetic strategies, which, increasingly calibrated and refined, have led to their work being called "cinematic".

Being at home in "the media gap"

One reason why is revealed in the 1987 tape *Taking on a Name*. Shot on location at Ohrid Lake in what was then Southern Yugoslavia, the video has three distinct sections, framed by a short prologue and coda. In the first, Beban, dressed neutrally, stands at the lake's edge, arms out-

stretched, tiny flames burning in the palms of her hands. In the next, in the same location, she wears a large cape. When she raises her arms, this is shown to be decorated with intricate painted images. She gradually sheds the cape to stand naked in the waves. Except for a slow forward zoom at the end, the camera remains static throughout the tape's 25 minutes, a stasis that emphasises the framing and composition of the images and the highly symmetrical arrangement of figure and ground: on the line where water and skyline form the horizon, her head centres the composition. The combination of priest-like posture and involuntary movement suggests that Beban, taut with effort, is literally holding the image together. Within this image is another, on the cape and slowly to be revealed out of her silhouetted figure by a subtly modulated lighting effect. In this as with many of the other tapes, the lighting is never obtrusive and decisively modifies and intensifies the rapt, ritualistic communion with the space being shot in. Similarly, the balancing of camera movement with stasis, and of montage with *mise en scène*, indicates a cinematic intelligence at work throughout the tapes. This is not to say that "real time/direct relay" is not also exploited, that feature of video that has attracted many artists (particularly those with an interest in performance). In fact, in such early tapes as *Plan* (1985) and *Bless My Hands* (1986) they worked with precisely this quality, to enhance and control the temporal element of performance pieces. But though they still make use of this aspect of video, their development beyond it shows that, despite the somewhat speciously delimited elaborations of certain critics on "instant replay/live relay" in video, one must also discuss cinema to do justice to their work.

"Cinematic" does not mean here a parodic reappropriation of iconic textual moments. Nor is it a matter of juggling filmic scraps in that metatextual funhouse that video-art becomes, in its common role as exemplary postmodernist *bricolage*. "Cinematic" might in fact be a term for a predicament that Beban describes: "being caught in the media gap". The dominant Anglo-American definitions of video-art tend to shut-

tle between 'performing the self' and 'surfing the simulacra'. Beban's and Horvatic's work together barely corresponds to one or other definition, and as a result they have regularly encountered the resistance of the highly parochial video-art community (which often expresses itself, defensively, in terms of debates on narrow specifics). However they have also found appreciative responses at such European film festivals as London, Oberhausen and Rotterdam, as well as 'Europa, Europa', the major group exhibition of 100 Years of the European Avant-Garde in Bonn. Nor is such approbation surprising, since their work exhibits a mixed cinematic inheritance that looks back in part to the filmic avant-garde of the 1960s and 1970s, but more importantly to the influences of such modernist masters as Robert Bresson, Carl-Theodor Dreyer, Andrei Tarkovsky and Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet.

Spaces and faces

These influences are discernible on the surface, in the images they choose (as the picture panels show), but also in aesthetic method and ideas. The two share with their chosen cinematic progenitors an aesthetic (which is of thinned-out narrative, sometimes dispensed with altogether). Image, no longer bound to strictly narrative function, is seen as a particle within a greater whole – a whole that cannot be represented directly within the ethical programme of such artists, but only alluded to. This programme differs for each director: it's political in Straub/Huillet, spiritual in Bresson and Dreyer, mytho-theological in Tarkovsky. For Beban and Horvatic, it's transcendental: this is the end that their aesthetic reticence serves. They share the modernist project of these filmmakers – "completed" image and finalised narrative are withheld, work understood as "process" rather than product. This last element, where method and manner combine, is most evident in their recurring fascination for spaces and faces and an intense existential relationship with location, their videos being, at least in part, the expression of *genius loci*. The intimate particularity of these places certainly matters: in *Taking on a Name*, there is the ►

EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED

'Nostalghia',
Andrei Tarkovsky (1983)
'Taking on a Name',
Beban/Horvatic (1987)

"In the sequence from 'Nostalghia', the actor has to cross an empty pool while keeping a candle burning, and several times fails. In our 'Taking on a Name', entirely composed around real-time performance, the sequence that follows the one shown, with Breda in the cape, takes place at dusk, while this morning sequence was determined by the hope that the flames in Breda's palms would have burnt down

precisely by the instant of sunrise, and was orchestrated by her gaze towards the point where the sun was due to rise. As in the Tarkovsky, the whole is dictated by the physical conditions of the Bressonian 'model' and the physical conditions in which she performs. These determine the length of the shot, and even its nature. If neither of her performances had worked then the two sequences couldn't have existed: no editing techniques could substitute for the real-time, long-take strategies operating here."



'Lancelot du lac',
Robert Bresson (1974)
'For You in Me and Me
in Them to Be One',
Beban/Horvatic (1988)

"Throughout 'Lancelot' the camera points down towards the soil, as though Bresson were indicating the background to events symbolically rather than geographically, the earth being associated with death. What's happening to the ground is what might ordinarily happen – horses stamp on it, blood flows into it. The only ritualised moment comes when the little girl kisses it, just after Lancelot, on his way to certain death, has left his sanctuary in the forest. This image is the one

which precedes the kiss. In our 'For You in Me', the framing and conception is very strict, to mirror the location, a monastery, but there's no sentimentality towards it. Here, Breda is simply addressing the material around her, the earth. This tape is very much about the spirit of a place. Its cinematic element arises from the combination of movements in shot and the movement of the shot. For example, the image of Breda lowering her head is preceded by a series of fades, tracks and tilts. Audiences viewing this tape today often comment that it resembles a weeping for and through the land, but this was never our intention at the time."

◀ Ohrid Lake abutting Macedonia, close to a Byzantine decorated cave familiar to Beban since her childhood, while in *For You in Me and Me in Them to be One* (1988) there is the Sopocani Monastery, an artist's retreat for her for ten years. But these spaces also resonate more generally, and are heavy with the promise of privileged moments accessible only if one can open up to the possibility of their mystery. Although such mysteries may remain specific to particular locales, the two have nonetheless learnt to convey something of the quality of the privileged moments. During conception and filming, the focus, combined with judicious lighting, is often on the real-time element of performance as it relates to the environment in near-ritual fashion. At later stages, this experience of time is enhanced by a delicate repertoire of fades, dissolves and cuts: their editing style gives their work its almost musical wholeness, the shapes of their videos remembered by the rhythms these edits deliver.

They might seem to share some of Bill Viola's fascination with video's power to reveal a natural landscape through extended contemplation, but without his panoply of lenses and sophisticated camera technologies; they prefer to approach their subjects with the equivalent of the 50mm lens, the most "objective" and least distorting of optical attachments. This sensitivity to space and place, and to figures and landscapes, emerges from their individual understanding of how *mise en scène* turns the act of representation to expressive advantage.

Not a word about the war

Mise en scène entails both a sensibility and an expressive dimension, which is where the two inherit from and acknowledge their modernist cinematic forebears. If their treatment of landscape is rooted in experience, their approach to the performer as human figure and face is drawn from Bresson and Dreyer. Asked about directing Marie Falconetti in *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, Dreyer once said that "the human face is the most beautiful landscape" – and we find this idea revisited, re-explored and reaffirmed in the pair's work. Moments of inconsequential everyday inwardness, street corner stares and

Asked about directing Marie Falconetti in 'La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc', Dreyer once said that "the human face is the most beautiful landscape"

instances of just-looking and just-being-looked-at crop up throughout the videos, until *Geography* (1989): then the interest in the face of the non-actor as a blank landscape that suddenly shifts, into itself and thus onto something else, receives its most extended and revealing treatment. For this, the pair had spent a week on the road searching for faces. On the seventh day, they turned to Bosko, their Macedonian driver, and recruited him. The four minutes he is in the tape were selected from two hours of continuous filming. The three (Beban beside the camera, Horvatic out of shot beside Bosko) sat in the location where *Taking on a Name* had been shot and thought about loss. The geography of the title has as much to do with the pensive fluctuations of lines on the landscape of a face as it has with the bloody cartography of the coming civil war in Yugoslavia. But the film also sees the former marked by anticipation of the latter and might in this sense be described as a poetic documentary of the micro-political.

Exploring their work for British readers, the uncomfortable subject of their flayed and savaged homeland must be broached. In fact, their work resists recruitment for or against either side, refusing partisanship. This aesthetic reticence should not be mistaken for political quietism, though of course it already has been. In *Art Monthly*, a review of the Whitechapel show asserted, with brisk British arrogance, that as "[r]efugees from the former Yugoslavia, these artists' painterly preoccupations seem to have been largely untouched by the momentous events that have been devastating their country." Here is what Paul Willemsen calls "ventriloquism": the desire to cast artists in preordained speaking roles, the two as exiles first, artists working in a specific fine-tuned visual language second. It is to their credit that they have seen through and declined such kidglove coercion into roles they have not themselves chosen. Considering the media trance of guilt and horror arising from TV coverage of the civil war, this seems an honourable ethical position for artists to take. When they exhibited at the World Wide Video Festival at the Hague in May 1993, the left wing Danish daily *Information* ran a full page interview with them devoted to exactly this issue of conflicting languages – of political brutality, media trance and aesthetic reticence – under the ironically non-committal headline 'Not a Word About the War'. Nonetheless, the experience of war hangs over such early 1990s works as *For Tara* (1991) and *The Life-line Letter* (1992), short visual poems in which simple, elemental imagery – blood, paper, fire and water in the former; electricity, infancy, the urban and the nocturnal in the latter – is elegantly arranged to express joy and sorrow, optimism and despair. Emotions are non-negotiable, and as undeniably present as the landscapes that they so often turn to in striving to express what Michael O'Pray has called "the inarticulate quality of some kinds of knowledge".

In the last two years their work has become increasingly ambitious and refined. Though

concerns and motifs visible in the earlier work are still present, there is a new urgency discernible in the rhythms of *The Left Hand Should Know* (1992) and *Absence* (1994). Indeed, at 43 minutes, shot in Italy, Canada, and England, *The Left Hand* is their magnum opus so far, the longest and the most geographically far-flung. Though it remains faithful to their presiding conception of the performer either as "all face" or else as a Bressonian "model", an ambulatory object in a landscape, the nature of that landscape has changed. The natural locations remain saturated with the aura of restorative beauty common to all their work, but now the urban landscape asserts a neon-streaked, rain-soaked geometry. As in *Absence*, the city in *The Left Hand* is a landscape of lost souls, of loveless trysts in lonely rooms and of an unspoken yearning for contact and communication (the ideal of this being nature itself).

Everything is connected

Exiles themselves, knowing the wrench of double-belonging exile confers on the city-dweller, the two have fashioned an extraordinary visual poem on this state as a mode of being-in-the-world that must not only be accepted but embraced. While the Island of Stromboli remains unattainable to the very end of the tape, the sense of anomie and isolation so strongly associated with cities is never completely overwhelming. As the female figure at the beginning of *The Left Hand* says, "Everything is connected."

Their recent work displays an increasing interest in narrative, albeit narrative of a resolute individuality and residing in the visual and rhythmic finesse developed across the tapes; forthcoming projects promise to make the exploration of such mantra-like observation even more beguiling. For, if only at some seemingly unbridgeable remove, everything in their work is connected: rhythm to duration, metropolis to landscape, man to woman, figure to landscape, the ethical to the aesthetic and, of course, cinema to video.

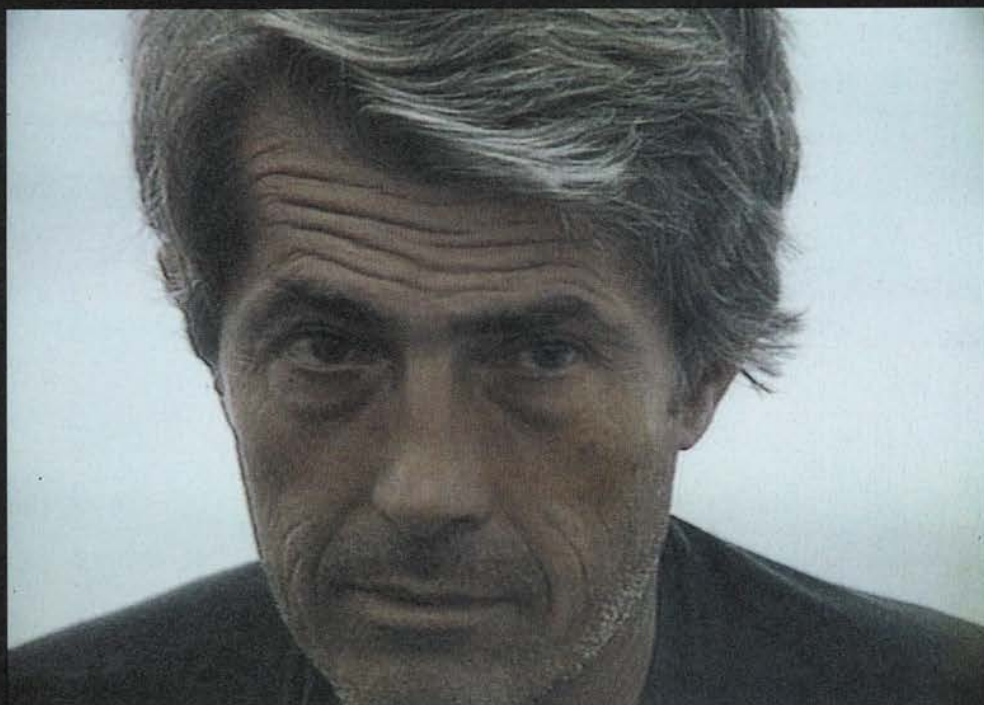
'Taking on a Name: the Retrospective' will tour to Liverpool, Hull and Karlsruhe, Germany, in summer and autumn 1995



'Not Reconciled', Jean-Marie Straub/Danièle Huillet (1964)
'The Left Hand Should Know',
Beban/Horvatic (1992)

"In the Straub/Huillet shot you can barely tell that the character facing Köln Cathedral is standing on a balcony: the Cathedral seems part of an interior. In our 'The Left Hand', because of the lighting in the street, the city seems literally to be in the room, although the character is leaning against a window. In both shots there seems to be no distinction between character and background:

this is achieved by the same technique, a foreshortening enabled by lighting and the most "objective" lens available. The foreshortening in 'Not Reconciled' has Johanna physically dominated by the Cathedral, an overwhelming presence from the past. In 'The Left Hand' the opposite effect is created: the background speaks of the absence of the past and of familiar reference points. We shot in downtown Calgary, now a deserted commercial centre where people have taken to living in the empty office spaces."



'Gertrud',
Carl-Theodor Dreyer (1964)
'Geography',
Beban/Horvatic (1989)

"The connection between Bosko's face in 'Geography' and these faces in 'Gertrud' is the presence of a gaze indicating that the performers are looking at the world around as well as looking within. In the Byzantine icon tradition, the gaze often falls somewhere between the face represented and the viewer's space. This is not something we can 'direct': we have to create the conditions in which the performer can find such

a gaze. There are several moments in 'Gertrud' where Nina Pens Rode has a look that can't really be located. Characters sharing the same space, the same frame, seem to look past one other without connecting. In 'Geography', the image that follows that of Bosko's gaze is a landscape, but by the time it arrives the spectator can't tell whether this is an 'objective landscape' or the subjective vision of the gaze they've become accustomed to. This shifting of a real landscape into the domain of memory matches the theme of the tape: the feeling of loss."



HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Scott McGehee and David Siegel talk with Jonathan Romney about 'Suture', their identity-thriller debut

● "How is it that we know who we are?" asks the voice-over that begins Scott McGehee's and David Siegel's perplexing identity thriller *Suture*. The film opens with a tense, enigmatic sequence: a black man waits in a building at night, as an armed white intruder stalks him through glacial, strangely vacant architecture. The voice-over continues, speculating in measured, clinical tones on identity and the crisis of self brought on by amnesia. The scene ends with an extraordinary overhead shot – gun at the ready, the black man waits behind a shower curtain as his foe approaches, while we anticipate both a showdown and an explanation. But we get neither – only a gunshot, a fade to white, and the voice breaking off with the enigmatic proposition that we should now go "back to a time before identity has been confused".

Was there ever such a time in the cinema of mystery? *Suture*'s opening works is a dramatisation of the key questions underlying the Hollywood noir tradition – the questions asked by William Holden lying face down in the pool at the beginning of *Sunset Boulevard* (1950); by the burnt-out case stranded in a diner out in nowhere in Edgar G. Ulmer's *Detour* (1945); and by every Marlowe-style gumshoe who ever got coshed on the head and came round in a blur of swimmy vision and momentarily lapsed memory: "Who am I?" and "How did we get here?"

Be warned that the film's considerable surprise factor may be spoilt for you if you read the following. *Suture* is the story of a role-swap between two half brothers. Vincent Towers (Michael Harris) is rich, elegant, self-assured and almost certainly a parricide; we know little

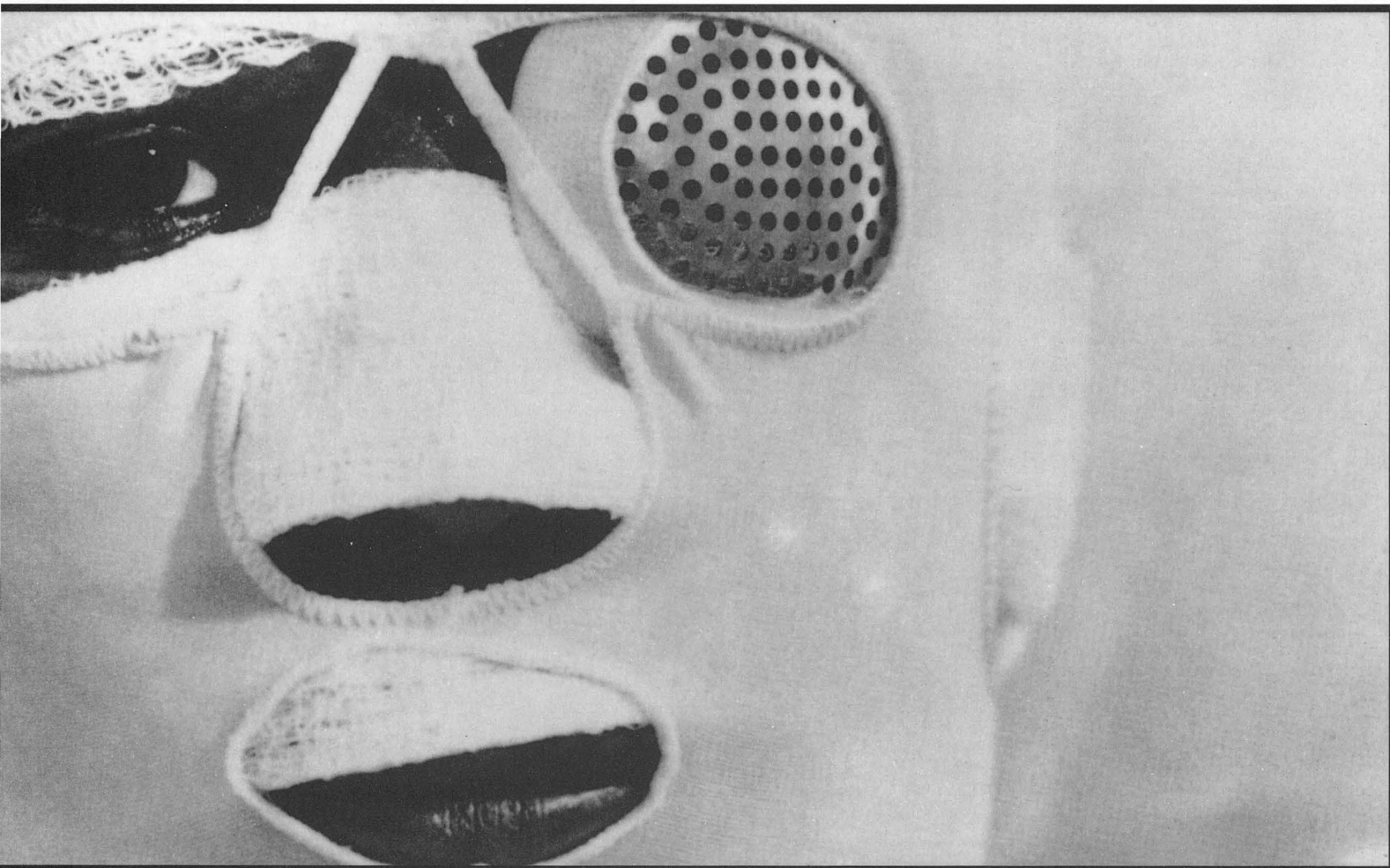
about the other, Clay Arlington (Dennis Haysbert), except what's obvious, that he's a poor, blue-collar guy from the sticks. Clay has been invited to town by Vincent; they only recently met at their father's funeral, where Vincent was struck by their remarkable physical resemblance. He has dark plans: he wants to kill his 'twin' so that he can himself conveniently disappear, thus evading the rap for his father's murder. He persuades Clay to put on his (Vincent's) clothes, plants his own ID on Clay, uses remote control to blow up his own car with Clay at the wheel, and leaves town. However, Clay survives, though terribly scarred and amnesiac; the local doctors, reasonably assuming that the unrecognisable victim before them must be Vincent, decide to rebuild Vincent's rather than Clay's face. Plastic surgeon Renée Descartes (Mel Harris) studies pictures and videos of Vincent to restore Clay's features, while psychoanalyst Dr Shinoda (Sab Shimono) tries to reconstruct Vincent's identity – from scraps of Clay's memory and dreams.

Had McGehee and Siegel executed their script literally, *Suture* might have been an ingenious, poignant psychodrama about a man robbed of his own face and obscurely struggling to find his self again – and the interest for us might have been in anticipating a restored Clay foiling his brother's plans. As such, it would have been served neatly by the film's stylish visuals, its bleached-out widescreen depiction of a vaguely anachronistic urban landscape that immediately evokes both Samuel Fuller and *The Twilight Zone* (in fact, it's more directly based on Teshigahara's 1966 role-swap film *The Face of*

Another and on Yoshitaro Nomura's *Tokyo Bay*). However, *Suture* adopts a "conceit" (as the filmmakers term it) that makes it impossible to regard the film merely as an essay in genre cool, and turns all our perceptions belly up. For though everyone in the film seems to think and say entirely otherwise, Vincent and Clay are not alike at all: Clay is black and Vincent is white. Yet no-one seems to notice. And when Clay is reconstructed as Vincent, he emerges from his bandages with his own face intact apart for an eyepatch. The usual notions of difference and identity thus become meaningless – or rather their meaning is suspended, as the film defies us to provide our own working definitions.

All of which may be an unusually dense set of considerations to arise from a debut feature, but they are also a testament to the eclectic concerns of the film's San Francisco-based makers. Scott McGehee has an MA in Rhetoric from Berkeley, and before turning to film-making was working on a PhD in Japanese film history; David Siegel studied architecture at Berkeley, took a Masters in Fine Arts at the Rhode Island School of Design and has also worked as an artist in San Francisco. They have been working together since 1989, making two prize-winning shorts before *Suture*: *Birds Past* (1989), in which vox-pop interviews about Hitchcock's *The Birds* are intercut with the story of two guys trying to video Melanie Griffith (daughter of Hitchcock's star Tippi Hedren); and *Speak Then Persephone* (1990), a restaging of the Persephone legend in Orange County.

Suture, one imagines, might have started life as a straight thriller which then took a concep-



tual detour in the casting. In fact, McGehee and Siegel explain, the casting idea arose out of the writing: "We attempted to construct a story that was generally about identity. It was in attempting to work out the story that the 'conceit' came up. It started in genre conventions – amnesia, plastic surgery, twins, mistaken identity, psychoanalysis. They were the map we started from. It could have been two guys that looked exactly alike. Or it could have been a man and a woman. We felt that to pursue this idea we had to push it as far as we could take it so that people wouldn't be trying to make sense of it in a realistic way. And we still find people trying to create narrative scenarios in which one's mother was black and one's was white."

Calling the film *Suture* seems something of a provocation, with its play on surgical stitching and Lacanian theory (you could also read it as a symbolic disruption of the word 'sure': certainty undermined): "The name came early on, as a joke. You don't want to make a film that's about theory from that end: it would be very dull. This film's very loosely about suture theory; it's more about identity and identification. Suture theory is about how the subject identifies with an accessible system – learning to understand the relationship between who he or she knows himself/herself to be, and a symbol of himself/herself that exists outside. That initial bond allows them to play in that symbol exchange which is language and culture. We might have come up with some elaborately structured system where point-of-view shots were reserved for certain situations about suture, but we didn't do anything like that. It's

really on a metaphorical level that you can talk about suture in the film."

One of the most distinctive aspects of 'Suture' is its setting. Shot in Phoenix, the film uses buildings (notably Vincent's impersonal ice-palace home) that seem to belong to no recognisable time or space, and that look very much like 'found' places: "We were trying to create a sort of unreal space. We wanted Vincent's space to be like a warehouse, but we found there was no warehouse district in Phoenix. Then we found this empty bank. The original idea was a reconstruction both of space and of Clay as a character, and the commercial space which he eventually occupies, this circular space, plays metaphorically with what's going to happen. Phoenix is almost like an abandoned city, it's so large and overbuilt and the streets are so dead it feels empty – it has a high modernist, very spare aesthetic. We tried in all aspects to keep the film mid-60s modern. We were set on black and white widescreen at the start – we were watching a lot of black and white films when we were planning it. Those films seem to create an environment in which you can have a story going on, but the space is unreal enough, that the formalism obliges you to think of ideas while you're watching them."

The identity-swap narrative might have been fascinating in itself, but *Suture* includes further levels of interpretation through the two experts Descartes and Shinoda, and this provides a whole new set of problems for the viewer: "From the genre plot, a character with amnesia implies a psychoanalyst. The way psychoanalysis has been used in films is really funny. It's

Spotting the difference: Clay as the victim of 'twin' Vincent in McGehee's and Siegel's 'Suture'

such a strict discipline, and to make it as reductive as films have tended to makes it become a wildly categorical, hyperbolic interpretation within the films themselves – films like *The Dark Mirror*, *The Locket*, *Ruby Gentry*..."

At one point, Shinoda (who presents the film as a case history in the opening voice-over) announces, "As Freud says, nothing is insignificant" – a cue to over-reading if ever there was one (we might do well to remember that, as Freud also says, sometimes a cigar is just a cigar). The evidence of our senses is sometimes undermined, sometimes over-confirmed by what we see. Few villains have ever been so manifestly rotten as Vincent, with his white suit, slicked-back hair and disdainful sneer, a cartoon incarnation of the generic evil yuppie. Yet when we find his features confirming what we know of his 'nature', are we more or less misguided than Dr Descartes is, with her 'white Renaissance' reading of Clay's manifestly black features, in particular his supposed "Greco-Roman nose" as a highly ideological signification of nobility of character?

It's here that *Suture* is most problematic, at odds with the tradition of films in which a black character becomes white or vice versa – *Watermelon Man*, *Soul Man*, *Chameleon Street*. Here the black man remains black, while being perceived as white. But there is the question of whether black and white here are anything other than a conceptual differentiation; is blackness used purely as a metaphor and thus stripped of the political realities of racial ►

◀ identity? It's true that Clay finds himself suddenly transplanted into a very white world of aristocratic chic and European ideals, represented on the soundtrack by Brahms, Wagner and Haydn. But we know nothing of Clay's own cultural make-up. As critic Roy Grundmann has pointed out, the film's images show a black man, rather than an African-American: Clay is only 'black' because it's Haysbert that has been cast to play him. But what do we expect a black character to be?

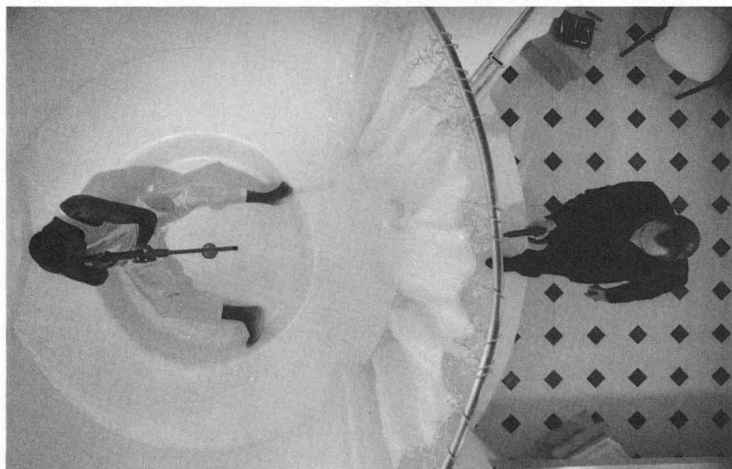
The film opens up gaps for us to fill with our own meanings, so it's not surprising that the film-makers feel that *Suture* will be read differently by black and white viewers: "I don't think you could help but interpret the film differently given the particular racial context within which you operate. In that sense it's a particularly American movie, because of that potential

split in interpretation, which would be racially different in every other country. For us, the film is foremost about identity. We didn't set out to make a film about black experience in America. How we've attempted to control those social metaphors in the film is pretty broad – we've attempted to keep the film more in the parameters of sociology than of race, the way the homogeneity of society affects the construction of a personal identity.

"We talked a lot about it – can we do this? Is it a fair game to be playing? The climate of culture in the US is that everyone's afraid of making the big mistake, even just participating in a cultural dialogue that is in any way outside what is defined as one's place in the culture. To say it's exploitative – in that we've created a reductive black character – is an argument one can make, but we think it's very very narrow."

That very reduction, though, is *Suture's* strength, because it obliges us to ask questions and suspend conclusions in a way that's more of an anomaly in cinema than it's ever been. By facing us with the stark polarity of black and white as colour (meaning purely chromatic difference), *Suture* challenges us to ask how they might mean something other than colour – and what racial identity might mean at all when its usual cultural signifiers are so radically suspended or exaggerated. Meanwhile, the film's neatest joke is on its soundtrack: the one pop song amid all those classical Teutons is Johnny Cash's 'Ring of Fire', as sung by Tom Jones – a redneck country anthem performed by a white Welsh boy who built his career on sounding like a black American.

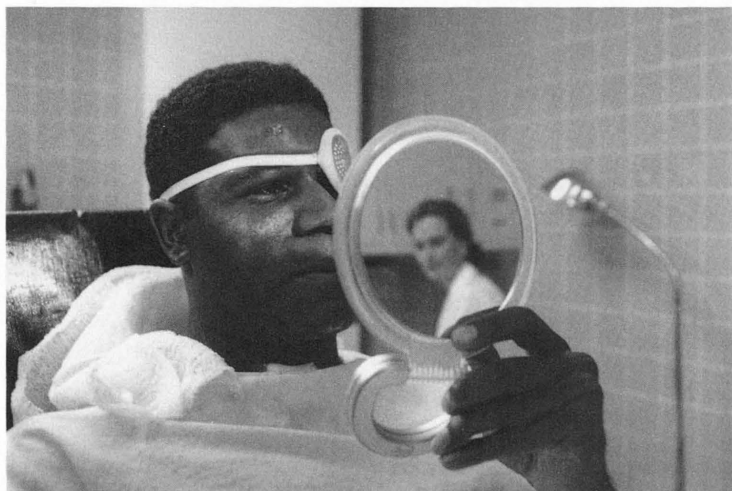
'Suture' opens on 27 January and is reviewed on page 54 of this issue



THE FILM-MAKERS DISCUSS SCENES FROM 'SUTURE'

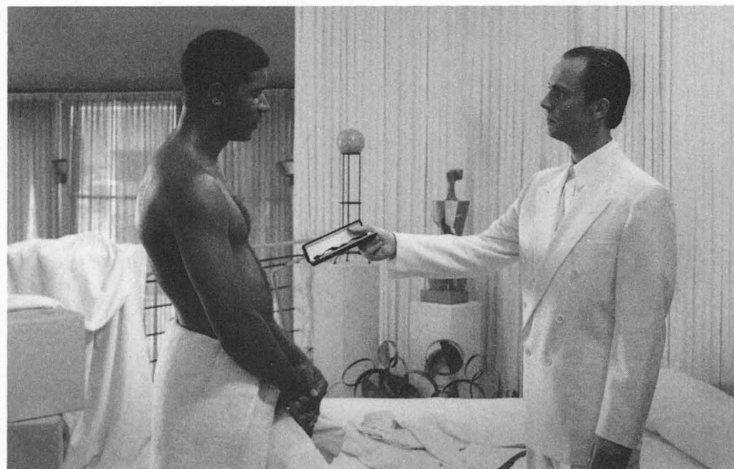
① "This set was completely designed, and built in a warehouse in Phoenix. This shot was very explicitly described in the set, and it came out exactly as described. It appears at the beginning, as a sort of pre-telling of the climax, and it fades to white. We call it the 'suture' moment, because it

immediately precedes the title card, but it's also emblematic of the relationship between the two men, a perfect diagram of them. Here, Vincent returns in black, and Clay's wearing white. We used excessive light and overexposed the film by a couple of stops, which increased the contrast. We decided we wanted it to be a white-and-black film, rather than noir, something that would be clinical and different."



③ "This is the scene of the bandage removal. When Dennis Haysbert lifted up the mirror, no one knew it was a two-sided mirror, and when Renée Descartes had walked across the room, there she was in the back of the mirror as well. It worked out so nicely, because you don't know when he lifts it up whether he hadn't perhaps turned the mirror to the wrong

side. Why is there a reflection on the other side? There's that shift: for so much of the film we see photos of Vincent, and Clay looking into mirrors. Now suddenly it's Renée. She's the doctor reconstructing the patient in some image that really came from her. It highlights the theme really nicely, but it's totally accidental."



② "This is the moment where Vincent intimidates Clay into wearing his garments and his watch. It's the moment where he foists his identity onto Clay. The space is white-curtained and all Vincent's belongings are still covered, he's only recently moved in. This shot is in a sequence where we deliberately 'jumped the line' – we shot two people looking directly at each other, from both sides; when cut together, it makes them

appear as if they're changing positions. There was an air-conditioning system in the building that we couldn't turn off, so all the dialogue in most of these scenes had to be re-recorded or really filtered, and it gives it this other-worldly quality. We used a lot of sounds that were recorded for Soderbergh's 'Kafka', recorded in huge stone buildings in Prague. Very low-level stuff, very subliminal, but it gives an eerie quality to these scenes."



④ "The Rorschach blot itself was suggested by the space we used for Dr Shinoda's office. We hadn't thought of having an oversized, dominating blot until we found the location. A big abstract expressionist blot, it highlights how fast and loose we're playing with psychoanalysis. Everything about our use is oversized and overly reductive interpretation of Clay's dreams, a too-

simple analysis of everything. It's surprising that no post-modernist painter has done huge Rorschach blots. Phoenix, where we shot the film, is designed so that a central street goes up the centre of the city. It's a mirror city, it folds out so that the streets on either side have the same numbers in different directions. It's the city as Rorschach blot."

THE LONDON • INTERNATIONAL • FILM SCHOOL

- Training film makers for over 30 years ●
- Graduates now working worldwide ●
- Located in Covent Garden in the heart of London ●
 - Accredited by B.E.C.T.U. ●
- 16mm documentary & 35mm studio filming ●
- Two year Diploma course in film making
commences three times a year: January, April, September ●

**London International Film School, Department S31
24 Shelton Street, London WC2H 9HP
071-836 0826**

Pioneer know-how

Robin Swicord

Script Girls: Women Screenwriters in Hollywood
Lizzie Francke, BFI Publishing,
£29.95 (hb) £11.95 (pb), 192pp

When gold was discovered in the American West in the mid-nineteenth century, sudden boomtowns sprang up, populated by miners and hordes of entrepreneurs selling their goods and services. Women coming to such towns saw a demand for their domestic know-how, and capitalised upon it. They built and operated boarding houses, restaurants and laundries. They went into the entertainment business, running saloons and brothels and performing in opera houses – then they turned around to invest their gold in massive cattle ranches and blocks of San Francisco real estate. In a frontier without walls, no door could at first be closed to them.

Script Girls, Lizzie Francke's excellent if abbreviated history of women screenwriters, tells of a similar boomtown phenomenon, when the film production companies

of New York and Chicago began spreading west in 1906 "to the sunnier climes of California and that new town, Hollywood". Francke describes these early production companies as "small-scale, family affairs... like travelling stock theatre groups... [to which] members chipped in with a variety of tasks". At that time, film-making still seemed a lawless frontier profession, with no unions and no closed doors. Women, hired as actors, soon found themselves pressed into service behind the camera as producers, editors, publicists, location managers, camera operators and screenwriters – then called scenarists. Movies were a kind of pulp fiction, a form of low entertainment. Most educated men sought higher-paying and higher-status professions, which left the young industry fairly open for young ambitious women such as Gene Gauntier, as actress-writer-producer the first successful female hyphenate.

Gauntier had graduated from the Kansas school of Oratory in 1905, leaving her middle-class family to pursue an acting career. Still in her teens, she joined the New York-based Kalem Film Company, where she was persuaded to write scenarios. Her adapta-

tion of Tom Sawyer was the first of an astounding 300 film scripts that she wrote and produced, including *From the Manger to the Cross*, the first biblical epic to be shot in Egypt. When Kalem's studio boss insulted her by releasing this epic without credits, she left to start her own studio. After making a film exposing the plight of girls working in sweatshops, she retired from film production in 1918 to become a journalist and war correspondent.

Script Girls brings us an array of similarly fascinating early film-makers. One is Jeanie MacPherson, who began as a director, becoming Cecil B. DeMille's scenarist and close collaborator on many projects, from *The Girl of the Golden West* (1915) to *The Ten Commandments* (1923). Another is future novelist Anita Loos, whose wit and flair for dialogue made her one of the most prominent screenwriters of her generation: she helped manufacture the screen persona of Douglas Fairbanks. Already a novelist, Elinor Glyn arrived from Britain in 1920 to recreate her "It" factor on-screen, for Clara Bow. (Samuel Goldwyn wrote of her steamy stories: "Elinor Glyn's name is synonymous with the discovery of sex appeal in the cinema.")

Women not only brought their style and humour to the screen, but also their ethics. Film-maker Lois Weber escaped a childhood of dire poverty to write and direct films that encompassed inequality, anti-Semitism, birth-control, and capital punishment, to inspire social change. But her career was truncated, as a slow chill descended over women's employment in film production. From *A Career Guide for Women*, published in 1920, Francke quotes one director's declaration that film directing could represent "no finer calling for women". Just 14 years later, the same career guide, updated, had dropped the entry on directing and replaced it with one on screenwriting. What had happened in the intervening years? *Script Girls* argues that the advent of sound films, by transforming movies from lowbrow entertainment to a powerful, more lucrative and more influential cultural force, made directing seem less appropriate for women.

Francke's careful scholarship guides us through the next 40 years, during which time a disproportionately small number of women laboured as screenwriters in Hollywood studios. Loos was a success, helping create the "shady lady" images of Jean Harlow, Joan Crawford and Norma Shearer; but Salka Viertel, who wrote for Greta Garbo, faced disappointment. After Garbo's sudden retirement, Viertel began work on a film about Marie Curie, only to be told by her employers at MGM that "no pretty girl would ever study chemistry or physics." Viertel was forced to abandon the project, and later her career.

We learn the details of the marginalisation of female writers, primarily into scripting "women's pictures", as typified by Catherine Turney's adaptation of *Mildred Pierce*, and by such Gothic romances as Hitchcock's *Rebecca*, co-scripted by Hitchcock's script editor and long-time collaborator Joan Harrison, from Daphne Du Maurier's novel. *Script Girls* also touches on Hitchcock's relationship with his wife Alma Reville, whose collaboration throughout his career was essential. ("Perhaps it would be more appropriate," Francke suggests in a footnote, "to talk of the Hitchcocks' pictures.") We are also given portraits of screen-



Preferred to gentlemen:
script girls such as
Anita Loos (right) once
dominated screenwriting



Where the boys are:
Frances Marion refused
to be typecast as a
"women's writer"

writers who refused to be typecast as "women's writers", such as Frances Marion, who won her first Oscar in 1930 for *The Big House*, and Leigh Brackett, who was Howard Hawks' primary collaborator, and whose career stretched from *The Big Sleep* (1946) to *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) for George Lucas. In its final two chapters, *Script Girls* tracks the difficult re-emergence of the female writer-producer and writer-director, hyphenates last seen in the Roaring Twenties, when films were still silent and women still had a voice.

Marginalisation and typecasting are still with us, despite such iconoclastic women as the highly-respected writer-producer Jay Presson Allen (who wrote Lumet's *Prince of the City*). Francke notes that romances such as Nora Ephron's *When Harry Met Sally* and *Sleepless in Seattle* are prevalent in this area, and points out that Ephron's approach to *Silkwood*, a "political" film, foregrounds "domestic life". Enjoyable pages are also devoted to *Thelma and Louise*, scripted by Calie Khouri, in which two friends bolt from the forced passivity of the domestic arena, to become outlaws operating under their own power. It might further have been observed that, while *Thelma and Louise* marks a reversal within the action genre (from "woman as object" to "woman as subject"), the domestic and romantic films that Francke tends subtly to mock provide something unusual in a male-dominated film industry. It is rare and thus almost always welcome to see a present-day film in which a woman is the protagonist, her emotions and desires fuelling the narrative.

Casino trades

Michael Eaton

Playland

John Gregory Dunne, Granta,
£14.99, 498pp

On the surface, John Gregory Dunne's new novel is yet another sortie into two familiar institutions: the Hollywood Jewish dynasties (known to readers from such sources, acknowledged by Dunne as *City of Nets* by

Otto Friedrich and *An Empire of Their Own* by Neil Gabler) and the world of the mobsters who built Las Vegas (most recently examined in Warren Beatty's underrated film *Bugsy*). Yet anyone who has ever experienced any of Dunne's other great novels of post-war America, such as *True Confessions* (which hears the sins of politics and the press), will know that no attempt at a bald plot synopsis can alert the novice reader to the style and substance on offer here.

Screenwriter Jack Broderick is researching yet another script for yet another project doomed never to get out of development. Lapsed Catholic, and all but lapsed human being, he meets a bagwoman who is eking out her existence in a trailer park on the outskirts of Detroit. The crazy old lady turns out to be Blue Tyler, Shirley Temple's only rival and once the biggest star on the slate of Cosmopolitan Films. She had faded from the stellar firmament after an appearance at the mid-50s Un-American Affairs hearings was quickly followed by another at the Kafauver hearings into organised crime. The studio, never having allowed her to play a grown-up on screen, ensured that she never had a childhood off it. She has wound up as a peculiar child-woman whose only skill is in collecting supermarket trade-in coupons.

Fascinated by this brief encounter, Broderick attempts to reconstruct Tyler's life story, particularly that part involving Jake King – who, while an emissary of an East Coast crime syndicate, saw the future in the desert sands of Nevada. Jake came west and fell for the star, alienating new and old money in the process. The *Playland* of the title is thus the casino of Jake's dreams, but also Blue's Hollywood – she whose optimistic, wholesome and patriotic star vehicles exist to obscure the industry's real sordid, corrupt and racist foundations. It is also, by metaphorical extension, America itself: more cesspit than melting pot.

Dunne has written far too many screenplays to make a fetish of structure. He has attended far too many brain-storming script conferences with intellectually-challenged industry doyens to imagine that only stories with stiff 'spines' and mathematically meticulous 'arcs' are worth telling. Doubtless he has been in the presence of far too many thespians to delude himself that behaviour can be adequately plumbed by recourse to motivation. So his novels eschew the tight-as-a-drum construction of the typical Hollywood narrative. His is a world of loose ends, of coincidences that lead only to cul-de-sacs, of great actions with small consequences and little gestures of seismic effect. Here certain questions can never be formulated, let alone answered. Movie endings, happy or otherwise, are rejected.

Morally compromised and discursively complicated, this swamp is more like the chaos of life than the simplicities of TV, newspapers or film. *Playland* is the latest letter from Dunne's alternative America (*Red, White and Blue* came out here in 1987). With characters of Old Testament stature and a glory in language both patrician and demotic, Dunne's books conjure an alternative landscape in parallel to the historical record, neither convincingly factual nor pointedly fantastical, folkloric yet naturalistically impure.

Some might say the most disturbing aspect of Dunne's fictions and characters is their roots in an America now over and

done with – which, for all its violence, corruption and ethnic hatreds, seems somehow more secure and sociologically readable to Dunne than the present ecology of shopping malls, overt cinematic sex and violence, and virtual reality. Who will be the Jake King, the Blue Tyler of cyberspace?

If you want to know about the mutual attractions of crime, money and power in today's Beverly Hills, read his brother Dominick's account of the Menendez brothers trial. *Playland* has a nostalgic, positively Celtic celebration of the way that the past defines the present, and, more significantly, constrains our operations in it, coupled with a wistful longing for those Americans who thought they could remodel their past as they built the future.

This wonderful novel is not so much about the movies in themselves as that repressed and repressive zone where movies come from. It will not help those who want to know more about what movies were, but for those who find themselves hamstrung by what the movies were not, it should be mandatory reading.

Sisyphean struggles

Lenny Borger

Keepers of the Frame: The Film Archives

Penelope Huston, BFI Publishing,
£29.95 (hb) £12.95 (pb), 176pp

One of the sociocultural highlights of the 80s was the emergence of the film archive movement into public consciousness. 1980 was the watershed in this hard-earned recognition. Within the space of just a few months, the return from exile of Abel Gance's *Napoleon* jolted audiences to the realisation that at their best, silent movies were not jerky spectral museum pieces, but could still astonish, matching the best of today's high-tech extravaganza.

Martin Scorsese then set up a cry of alarm about colour-fading, reminding moviemakers (and shakers) that it wasn't only nitrate that couldn't wait for action. The "Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images" was adopted by the General Assembly of UNESCO, creating a context in which film archivists could now work with renewed confidence and purpose – if not always with the necessary financing.

Keepers of the Frame is the latest addition to the short bookshelf on film archiving and preservation aimed at a general film-conscious readership. Of note, prior to Huston's study, were only Raymond Borde's *Les Cinémathèques* (1984) and Anthony Slide's *Nitrate Won't Wait* (1992). Borde, founder of the Toulouse film archive, helpfully put the archive movement in perspective, particularly as it pertained to the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAPF) and French archives generally. Eight years later, Slide filled his book with much fascinating history concerning film preservation in the US, as well as specifics about restoration.

Huston's book doesn't aspire to the factual exhaustiveness of Slide's. In fact, if the punning title is appropriate, its subtitle – *The Film Archives – delivers rather less than it promises*. As its author, a former editor of *Sight and Sound*, affirms, *Keepers of the Frame* deals largely with the history and workings of the National Film and Television Archive (to which it is dedicated). NFTA is her ►

◀ “home base”, and she says that it remains among the “most stable, principled and highly regarded” of archives. The closest Huston comes to a critique of the British archive is when she notes it has “a long standing reputation for inaccessibility to live down”. This, then, is very much an official biography of an institution, as published by its parent organisation: archive-bashers and frustrated researchers keep your distance.

Yet by keeping the NFTA in centre frame, Huston has inevitably to deal with the full spectrum of archival experience. From the basics of nitrate preservation to the conundrums arising from new technologies, she writes of the Sisyphean struggle to preserve audio-visual heritage with clarity and elegance. In the process she vividly recounts the strange and fascinating history of FIAF, of which the British archive, then known as the National Film Library, was a founding member. Her pages on the tragicomic cold war between NFA pioneer Ernest Lindgren and the Cinémathèque Française’s Henri Langlois, are enriched by access to Lindgren’s papers at the BFI and her own amused reminiscences of Langlois, described as “that Falstaffian figure, outsize in both his virtues and failings”.

A caption bloop for the photo on page 54 suggests a curious fuzziness in her more recent French history, however. This chilling image is not, as claimed, of the Cinémathèque’s nitrate fire of 1959 (minor in the volume of destruction, though major in its repercussions), but of the massive and disastrous fire in 1980 at a suburban Cinémathèque Française warehouse, where upwards of 40 per cent of the Langlois collection is estimated to have been lost, including original negatives to many early French silent films.

Huston also propagates the nonsensical myth that Langlois cut the intertitles out of silent prints. The truth is that, lacking the funds to print up and splice title cards into his negatives, Langlois – who loved film not wisely but too well – simply made a virtue out of necessity by declaring that a good silent film didn’t need titles.

More seriously, she fudges and skimps in her summary of the legacy of confusion in France since Langlois’ death. She picks up the thread in the early 90s, when Michelle Aubert arrived from the NFA to head the dysfunctional state film archives at Bois d’Arcy (long promoted as the squeaky-clean and scientific alternative to the rank disorder of Langlois’ Cinémathèque). Aubert was instrumental in setting up the emergency 15-year nitrate plan which involved the three major French archives (Toulouse was the third of these).

But Huston overlooks certain events: in 1983, six years after Langlois’ death, the Cinémathèque had at last received the financial means to launch its own preservation and restoration programme, which bore prestigious fruit (among it, the reconstitution of the films of theatrical pioneer André Antoine and the productions of the White Russian film colony of Paris). Unfortunately, in the past three years, under new management, the Cinémathèque first dismantled its restoration department, and has now embarked on a new “policy of safeguarding and restoration” that is a travesty of the goals and methods of film preservation that Huston’s book describes.

Robust vanities

Larry Gross

The Cradle Will Rock

Orson Welles, Santa Teresa Press, \$35.00, 124pp

Welles’ 1984 screenplay dealing with his own comic misadventures staging Marc Blitzstein’s Marxist opera in 1937 confirms an observation made by Pauline Kael of *Citizen Kane*. She pointed to an under-reported influence on Welles, the breathless, breezy newspaper comedies of the 30s, a genre where romance, social commentary and the worlds of crime and showbiz interact. Their comic exuberance colours not only *Citizen Kane*: it makes continuous appearances in Welles – in the satirical handling of Grisbie the lawyer in *The Lady From Shanghai*, in Akim Tamiroff’s phoney-tough gangster-play in *Touch of Evil*, and memorably in the robust vanity of Falstaff, played by Welles himself in *Chimes at Midnight*.

The Cradle Will Rock is simultaneously a vigorous example of the genre Kael referred to and a poignant reconstruction of the world

that gave rise to it. Welles, John Houseman and many other Mercury Theatre alumni are present here in the full, glamorous flush of youth.

Cradle’s failure to come to fruition is succinctly retold in Jonathan Rosenbaum’s excellent afterword. Welles appealed unsuccessfully to the powers in 1980s Hollywood (Spielberg and Beatty were among those who sniffed around the project before turning it down). Things looked good in the aftermath of a nostalgic and sentimental American Film Institute Lifetime Achievement Award dinner in 1975, broadcast to a nation-wide television audience, but as usual Hollywood’s elite found a way to ignore Welles’ practical needs, even as they paid homage. Welles was always more palatable as a tragic ideal than a working director, and his last days confirm another observation of Kael’s: “Hollywood is the only place on earth where it is possible to die of encouragement.”

Cradle depicts the excitement and promise of the Mercury Theatre, but composer Marc Blitzstein’s aspiration to make commercial theatre a vehicle for left-wing ideas also features. Welles’ conflation of his own destiny with the chances for a revolutionary political theatre in the late 30s is a typically complicated, solipsistic gesture. The theme of his own identity is at the centre of all, here as elsewhere. Is he good or evil, conservative or progressive, a cheap magician at play or a potent creator plumbing the Faustian depths? His endlessly fertile uncertainty about himself was the point of departure for restless dramatic invention, and his detractors in the press and the industry should understand that ample and vehement accounts of him as a madman, fraud or fool can be found in the films themselves.

This capacity to treat himself as the object of ironic scrutiny makes him a joy for post-modern critical theorists, both as object of and ancestor to their concerns. What classic Hollywood text involves “putting the subject in question” as decisively or as effectively as *Citizen Kane*? What can filmic deconstruction possibly be if not the mirror scene at the end of *The Lady From Shanghai* (where sexual desire, narrative closure and the unpossessible image of the self come together in a triangular smash of meaning and its absence)?

Beyond film, there are many different versions of Welles to study. He can be the performer we channel-surf in search of on cable, the perennial stuff of tragic Hollywood mythology, or a text chewed on by new critical instruments. While the versions proliferate, it’s our duty to lament how few films there are to study and enjoy. In the tender buoyancy of *Cradle*’s script, there is an undertow of grief reminiscent of Shakespeare’s late romances: the comic resolution of the revenge plot in *The Winter’s Tale* is seen in relation to an earlier work, *Othello*, with its quite different aftermath. Similarly, as we watch Welles and Blitzstein dash around trying to make the show go on, we are compelled to reflect on Welles’ painful awareness of those many subsequent projects that never came to be. The honour roll of his initiated-but-uncompleted work reads like a funeral chant of Hollywood and American cultural history that might have been: *Heart of Darkness*, *Don Quixote*, *The Other Side of the Wind*. To this melancholy litany we must now add *The Cradle Will Rock*.

Self-reflexive: the many versions of Orson Welles



BET STILLER POSTERS AND DESIGNS

The Goons and a bomb on Broadway

One day last October in LA I was rooting around in the garage of a house a few blocks from 20th Century Fox studios. The house belonged to Iris Frederick, whose daughter Lynne was Peter Sellers' last wife, and the garage was full of books, records, tapes and photographs, unopened trunks and cases. Early last year Lynne Frederick was found dead here, age 39, and this haul had come to light (previously it was in a basement in Gstaad, since Sellers' death in 1980).

I was making a documentary on Sellers for BBC's *Arena*, and was looking for images we didn't already have, for possible inclusion. While in LA I was also intending to conduct several interviews, including one with Mel Brooks. So my attention was drawn to two items in particular, a reel of quarter-inch tape labelled "Interview with Mel Brooks" and a German helmet.

Sellers is an elusive subject for the biographer not because of a lack of evidence but because of its sheer volume. As I tried to make sense of the bigger story, I was coming across a myriad of sub-plots, too many to be contained in a filmed biography. I wanted to talk to Brooks about *The Producers* (1967), which Sellers had developed a strange obsession for, that had remained with him for the rest of his life. They had never worked together, but I had a photo of them together on a Sellers film set in New York in 1963, so I knew they had met.

Private viewing

The tale began in 1967, according to the existing books. Sellers was in Hollywood, making *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!* (1968). To while away the evenings, he and screenwriter Paul Mazursky would take turns choosing movies to view. One night, their chosen movie having failed to arrive, the projectionist suggested they instead watch a film, as yet unreleased, that happened to be lying around; in it a low-life Broadway producer, Max Bialystock (Zero Mostel), teams up with an emotionally retarded accountant, Leo Bloom (Gene Wilder), to stage a musical. It's a scam – they plan to make off with the upfront money, having oversold the project many times. For this reason *Springtime For Hitler*, written by a shell-shocked Nazi, must be a surefire bomb. Only it isn't.

This film, of course, was Brooks' *The Producers*, and Sellers, hooked, seems to have become concerned that the film would be overlooked. He took out a laudatory full-page advert in *Variety*, calling it one of the greatest comedies ever made. However the critics hated it, and audiences stayed away.

My first encounter with this saga came when I interviewed journalist Herbert Kretzmer early in my research. Kretzmer had been writing about Sellers since the late 50s, Sellers had befriended him, and one night in the early 70s Kretzmer was one of several people forced to miss a jazz concert at the Royal Festival Hall when Sellers couldn't find a parking space for his Rolls Royce. They found themselves dragged back by Sellers to his Victoria apartment, to be shown his very own private print, but once there they simply sat around all evening as their host failed to find a take-up spool.

Television director Peter Lydon unravels some strange connections in the tale of Peter Sellers' odd devotion to Mel Brooks' comedy 'The Producers'

During the following months, similar stories were recounted to me again and again. When I was filming in the old Victoria flat with two of his former employees, they recalled having to set the projector up time and time again and sit while he ran the film. Sometimes he only needed to see a few minutes-worth, but he always refused to watch it alone. I took Michael and Sarah, his first two children, back to the beautiful house where he had lived with Britt Ekland, just outside Guildford, from 1964 to 1969, his heyday as a star. The cinema he had built over the garage was still there, the projection room intact, the retractable screen still retractable. His children remembered having to sit through dad's favourite movie repeatedly, Sarah that the print was taken everywhere, on holiday and even to lunch.

As his career disintegrated towards the end of the 60s, his devotion to *The Producers* appeared to increase. In 1972 he went on the *Parkinson Show* dressed as the Nazi songwriter, in helmet and great coat, reciting whole chunks of the character's lines. Doug Haywood, Michael Parkinson's tailor (and briefly Sellers') told me that Sellers had agreed to appear only if he could come on dressed that way. This character was somewhere to hide until he felt comfortable enough to reveal a more personal self.

Eventually I got around to rewatching *The Producers* myself. It was a surprise to see it again – both for what it actually is, and also because I was now trying to look at it through Sellers' eyes, seeing in it all the elements of his background from childhood, through the war to *The Goon Show*.

Beneath the late 60s veneer of amorality, the film is essentially an old-fashioned Jewish showbiz story. It was like watching the Marx Brothers, updated. Max's seduction of a succession of rich but frustrated old ladies to raise funds reminded me of Groucho's remorseless, mercenary pursuit of Margaret Dumont. Women are objects of derision or lust in this rather sealed male world: apart from the old dears being tapped for cash, the only other significant female is the Swedish secretary (Lee Meredith) Max and Leo both salivate over. Such a male cartoon of desirability would have appealed to Sellers, whose own relationships with women were disastrous (at this time his marriage to Britt, his very own Swedish object of desire, was on the rocks).

He had been born into a Jewish music hall troupe and had spent his childhood around the variety halls, where he would have witnessed an English version of this same Jewish showbiz world. *The Producers* is highly theatrical, mostly interiors with few locations, and long dialogue scenes, and dominated by the Mostel and Wilder double act. Though he hated the discipline and repetition of theatre itself, Sellers loved being on-stage – those who remember his vaudeville act describe it as extraordinary.

The film was given a brash contemporary edge by its lampooning of Nazism. The Goons, another sealed male world (Sellers' favourite) revelled in the sounds and imagery of World War Two, trading on the experiences as servicemen of its stars Sell-

ers, Spike Milligan and Harry Secombe. The characters were larger than life, bordering on caricature – Sellers enjoyed playing this kind of role. Like *The Goon Show*, *The Producers* was about men mucking around, hatching dastardly plans to make themselves rich and ending with everyone being blown up.

The missing piece

I felt that even if Mel Brooks could shed no further light on the saga, at least I could get some thoughts on Sellers the comic actor. At first Brooks couldn't understand why I wanted to talk to him about a man he claimed not to know – and not to have even met. But I showed him my photo of him with Sellers in 1963, and something clicked. Out tumbled a missing piece of the jigsaw.

Brooks was a successful comedy writer back then but not yet a director. He remembered he had met Sellers and handed him a script for something called *Springtime For Hitler*, the original title of *The Producers*. Brooks wanted Sellers to play Bloom. He remembered going shopping with Sellers, and trying to pitch the script to a man seemingly more interested in the shopping. Brooks doesn't know if Sellers ever read the script of this small black comedy by a first-time director: by then he was a big, busy star (that year alone he completed *The Pink Panther*, *A Shot in the Dark*, *Dr Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* and *The World of Henry Orient*).

Back in the Fredericks' garage, on my last day in LA, I was able finally to listen to the tape that was so intriguingly labelled. Clearly recorded in England, on Sellers' own equipment, it featured Sellers and Brooks fooling around, first as two Americans, then an English Sellers interviewing Brooks in his popular guise as the 2000-Year-Old Man. Given the amount of actual contact between them, it seems odd that the encounters had left so little impression in Brooks' memory, but the tape was proof that Sellers was well acquainted with Brooks' humour.

Where does this leave us? This was an obsession with a film that Sellers could himself have starred in, in subject and in fact, made by a man whose work he was already a fan of. Sellers was always looking for ways of translating *The Goon Show* feeling to the big screen, and had ruined several films and driven certain directors to the edge of madness in pursuit of it. Here was a film that seemed to have captured it all, and to see it gloriously completed at a point when his own career and private life were in crisis must have been deeply frustrating. Yet rather than trying to ignore it and risk letting it gnaw at him, he became almost its sole industry-champion. Its failure at the box office may almost have suited him, as it meant he could continue to evangelise about a forgotten film the powers-that-be had overlooked. He adopted it, and went further. By repeated viewing, by dressing up as a character, by wholesale appropriation of parts of the script into his patter, he strove retrospectively to 'star' in *The Producers* through a kind of osmosis.

Peter Lydon's three-part BBC2 'Arena' on Sellers will go out on February 11, 18 and 25



Lust: Wilder, Mostel, Meredith

REVIEWS

Reviews, synopses and full credits for all the month's new films plus selected British independent films

Bandit Queen

India/United Kingdom 1994

Director: Shekar Kapur

Certificate

18

Distributor

Mainline Pictures

Production Company

A Kaleidoscope

production for

Channel Four

Producer

Sundee Singh Bedi

Associate Producer

Varsha Bedi

Production Co-ordinators

Amita Sehgal

Bombay:

Kumar Ladakhi

Production Manager

Vishwamitra

Location Manager

Sanjay Malik

Post-production Supervisor

Stephen Barker

Assistant Directors

Mike Higgins

R. Kanan

P.K. Murali

Sunil Chhabra

Sandeep Prabhakar

Alok Kapur

Casting

Tigmanshu Dhulia

Screenplay

Mala Sen

Dialogue

Ranjit Kapoor

Director of Photography

Ashok Mehta

Additional Photography

Gilles Nutgens

Steadicam Operator

Deep Pal

Editor

Renu Saluja

Production Designer

Eve Mavrakis

Art Director

Ashok Bhagat

Set Dresser

Sujata Sharma

Costume Design

Dolly Ahluwalia

Make-up Artists

Edwin Williams

Mohd Iqbal Sheikh

Music

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan

Music Director

M. Arshad

Music Arrangements/

Producer

Roger White

Sound Editor

Tim Lewiston

Production Sound Mixer

Robert Taylor

Sound Re-recording Mixer

Richard King

Post-production Sound

Lokesh Dhawan

Stunt Co-ordinator

Alan Amin

Cast

Seema Biswas

Phoolan Devi

Nirmal Pandey

Vikram Mallah

Manoj Bajpai

Man Singh

Rajesh Vivek

Mustaqim

Raghuvir Yadav

Madho

Govind Namdeo

Sriram

Saurabh Shukla

Kailash

Aditya Srivastava

Puttilal

Agesh Markam

Mad Woman

Anirudh Agarwal

Babu Gujjar

Anil Sahu

Chotelal Siraswal

Nazim Patel

Nazim Hussain

Pawan Gupta

Pradeep Gupta

Vibanshu Vaidhava

Vinod Tiwari

Vikram Gang Members

Anupam Shyam

Ganshyam

Ajai Rohilla

Surendra Kora

Behmai Men

Aseem Bajaj

Basant Rawat

Dhawal Gwaliori

Lakshmi Narayan

Puran Bhatt

Rakesh Raekwar

Sanjeev Kumar

Yogesh Gupta

Phoolan/

Man Singh Gang

Ashok Bulani

D.S.P.

Ashok Sharma

Ashokchand Servant

Avinash Nemade

Doctor

Deepak Chibber

S.P. Bhind

Deepak Soni

Miandad

Dilip Raghuvanshi

Commander Yadav

Gajraj Rao

Ashokchand

G.B. Dixit

Ala Singer

Girish Solanki

Tarika's Partner

Guddi

Munni

Gyan Shivpuri

Phool Singh

Narish

Tarika

Hemant Mishra

Policeman

Hemmat Pandey

Ashokchand's Friend

Jeetendra Shastri

Bharat

Kamla Bhatt

Rukhmani, age 11

K.D. Segan

A.D.C.

Khunni Lal Maina

Pundit

Mahesh Chandra

Chief Minister

Malabai Sonwani

Mother-in-law

Mandakini Goswami

Kailash's Wife

Pallavi Bhatti

Little Girl

Paritosh Sand

Devendra Singh

Ram Charan Nirmalkar

Deviden

Ranjit Chaudhry

Shiv Narain

Raj Kumar Kamle

Thakur Gang

Ravi Sangde

Messenger

Savitri Raekwar

Moola

Sitaram Panchal

Lalaram

Sunil Gaekwad

Rattan Chand

Sunita Bhatt

Little Phoolan

Uma Vaish

Rukhmani

Vijay Shukla

Ashokchand's Friend

10,760 feet

120 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Subtitles

In a village in Uttar Pradesh, eleven-year-old Phoolan Devi is married against her will to the 30-year-old Puttilal. He takes her home, where he beats and eventually rapes her. She runs away to her family, who reluctantly accept her back. When she rejects the advances of the village headman's son, a member of the higher-caste Thakur clan, she is accused of leading him on. Banished from the village, she goes to live with her cousin Kailash, but his wife grows jealous and throws her out. Back in her village Phoolan is falsely accused of theft, and raped in jail by the police. The Thakurs arrange to have her kidnapped by local bandit chief Gujjar, who brutalises and repeatedly rapes her.

Vikram, Gujjar's young right-hand man, protests against this behaviour, and when Gujjar takes no notice shoots him dead. Though of low caste Vikram assumes command, and Phoolan becomes a fully-fledged bandit fighting alongside her comrades. The gang's fortunes prosper, and she and Vikram become lovers. The bandits' original leaders, the Thakur brothers Sriram and Lalaram, are let out of jail and resume command. Vikram is mysteriously shot, and Phoolan takes him to a doctor in the city. On his recovery they visit her family; her father tells her to go to her husband. Phoolan does so, and beats Puttilal almost to death.

Phoolan and Vikram rejoin the bandits, but Vikram is shot dead. Sriram has Phoolan tied up and raped by the gang, then takes her to the village of Behmai and publicly strips her naked. She takes refuge with Kailash who introduces her to Man Singh, a member of a mainly Muslim bandit force led by Mustaqim. With Mustaqim's backing, Phoolan forms her own gang with Man Singh. They launch a daring raid on the town of Jangrajpur, and Phoolan becomes famous as the Bandit Queen. Told that Sriram and Lalaram are attending a wedding at Behmai she attacks the village, but the brothers escape. In their place she has 24 Thakur men massacred. The state authorities, alarmed at her reputation, launch a massive campaign against her, and through information supplied by Sriram most of her followers are killed. Phoolan and Man Singh, evade capture, but in 1983 she surrenders on her own terms before a cheering crowd. End titles tell us she was released ten years later.

Simply on the grounds of sexual outspokenness, *Bandit Queen* was guaranteed to raise a furore in its native country. When even on-screen kissing is taboo, to show nakedness and graphically enacted rape amounts to a deliberate challenge, and the film's producers can hardly have been surprised when it was banned. But the Delhi government's outraged response, one suspects, was due less to offended propriety than to the exposure of an India as far from the tourist-board image of timeless wisdom and harmony as can be imagined. *Bandit Queen* depicts a callous, caste-ridden and bru-

tally sexist society where beating and rape – in or out of marriage – is the normal lot of lower caste women. Phoolan's story is unusual only in that she resists. At one point, as the two Thakur bandit leaders negotiate their release from jail, we see in the background a woman being viciously slapped around by a group of police. No one else in the scene even glances at her; the spectacle is clearly too commonplace to be noticed.

Part of the film's strength lies in its rejection of received images of India. There is nothing of the hippie-dream but equally nothing of the Oxfam-poster version: life in these Uttar Pradesh villages may be hard, but nobody's starving. Religion scarcely figures (except that Phoolan gets better treatment from Muslim bandits than from Hindus, as they're indifferent to caste), nor does scenic beauty: most of the action is set in the barren ravines around the river Chambal, a terrain devoid of charm or grandeur. Relentlessly and single-mindedly *Bandit Queen* homes in on its central story – supposedly based on Phoolan's own memoirs, dictated in jail, though she herself now denounces it as a distortion (in particular she claims her struggle had nothing to do with caste, and that she wasn't present at the Behmai massacre).

But whatever its fidelity to the truth, the film exerts a shattering force – all the more so for its occasional rough edges. Some of the earlier scenes suffer from ragged pacing, and a few performances lack focus – though not that of Seema Biswas, who plays Phoolan with searing intensity and a tangible sense of anger. There are gaps in the narrative: it's never explained how Phoolan, out of water and ammunition, with all her followers killed except one, still has clout enough to dictate her own terms of surrender. These imperfections scarcely detract from the film's key quality, a headlong indignation whose impact might well be softened by a more polished production.

Not that *Bandit Queen* is technically crude: the camerawork is agile and at times – as in the gang rape sequence – tellingly oblique, and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan contributes a subtle, classically-based score. But there's a harsh immediacy of texture that matches the subject matter, never letting us distance ourselves from the atrocities. At a time when screen violence is becoming increasingly stylised, from the choreographed shoot-outs of John Woo to the comic-book splatter of Tarantino, Kapur takes us right back to the basic article: stupid, sickeningly repetitive violence that bludgeons and degrades. We're even denied the easy comfort of retribution; Phoolan's victims are the wretched Puttilal and two dozen villagers of the wrong caste, while the chief villains Sriram and Lalaram escape her vengeance. Yet despite all this, *Bandit Queen* is far from depressing, thanks to the sheer resilience of its heroine. Too bad her fellow-countrywomen may never get the chance to see it.

Philip Kemp

Barcelona

USA 1994

Director: Whit Stillman

Certificate 12
Distributor Rank
Production Companies Castle Rock Entertainment/Westerly Films
Producer Whit Stillman
Associate Producers Edmon Roch Cecilia Roque
Westerly Films Supervisor Russell Pennoyer
Production Co-ordinator Yoli Marquerie
US: Allan R. McKinnon
Production Manager Fernando Marquerie
Location Manager Marc Jove
Assistant Directors Manuel L. Cañizares Morrosko Villa-San Juan Gabriel Lasalle Sergio Martos
Casting Billy Hopkins Simone Reynolds
Screenplay Walt Stillman
Additional Dialogue/Supervisor of Spanish Elements Irene Perez-Porro
Director of Photography John Thomas
Additional Photography Jaume Peracaula Emili Llorach
Camera Operator Emili Llorach
Editor Christopher Tellefsen
Production Designer José Mareia Botines
Set Dresser Margalida Obrador
Special Effects Reyes Abades
Costume Design Edi Giguere
Wardrobe Supervisor Francisca Naharro
Make-up Chass Llach
2nd Unit: Pilar Gatiús
Hairstylist Margarita Font
2nd Unit: Rosa Benavides
Title Design Louise Fili Ltd Pam Shaw
Cadre Graphics
Titles/Opticals The Effects House Michael Ventresco
Music Mark Suozzo
Music Consultant Leopoldo Pomes Jnr
Songs/Music Extracts "Pennsylvania 6-5000" by Carl Sigman, Jerry Gray, performed by The Glenn Miller Band; "Quiereme siempre (Love Me Forever)" by G. Lynes, B. Guthrie (Spanish version Ben Molar), "Hora del crepusculo (Twilight Time)" by Buck Ram, Morty Nevins, Al Nevins (Spanish version Ben Molar), performed by Cinco Latinos; "Ligia Elena" by Ruben Blades; "Dolce Vita" by Grombini, Massolini, performed by Ryan Paris; "Flamenco Guitar" by and performed by Pedro Cortes; "L'Home dibuixat" by Jaume Sisa, performed by Orquesta Plateria; "You've Got What it Takes" by Sylvester Levay, Stephan Prager, performed by Silver Connection; "Sueños de amor" by and performed by Rafael del Estad; "Everybody Limbo" by Mark Suozzo, Lou Christie, performed by Jeff Young; "Breakin' Up" by Mark Suozzo, Lou Christie, performed by Lou Christie; "Una lacrima sul viso" by Mogol, I. Pattacini, performed by Bobby Solo
Supervising Sound Editor Catherine Benedek
Dialogue Editors Louis Cerborino Daniel Korintus
Sound Recordist/Music Mixer Ted Spencer
Foley Engineer Paul Zydell
Dolby stereo consultant: Robert S. Warren
Re-recording Engineer Dominick Tavella
Foley Artist Nancy Cabrera
Cast
Taylor Nichols Ted Boynton
Chris Eigeman Fred Boynton
Tushka Bergen Montserrat
Mira Sorvino Marta
Pep Munné Ramon
Hellena Schmiel Greta
Nuria Badia Aurora Boval
Thomas Gibson Dickie Taylor
Jack Gilpin Consul
Pere Ponce Young Doctor
Laura Lopez Ted's Assistant
Francis Creighton Frank
Edmon Roch Javier
Diana Sassen Woman, Night of San Juan: "Shootings in America"
Angels Bassas Woman, Night of San Juan: "Jazz"
Elisenda Bautista Woman, Night of San Juan: "USO Bombing"
Andrea Montero Trade Fair Girl
Paul Degen Jurgen: "People not ants"
Paca Barrera Plain Princess
Nico Baixas Hangar Trumpeter
Gerardo Seeliger Weekending Doctor
Merce Puy Rosa Grifell
Hospital Nurses Francesco X. Canals
Marta's Other Guy Juan Martinez-Lage
Terrorist Gunman

Isabel Ruiz de Villa
 Montserrat Zubiria
 Sevillanas Dancers
 Gabriela Tubella
 Leopoldo Pomes Jnr
 Ana Sans
 Elizabeth Sans
 Carina Murtra
 Helena Garrahou
 Nacho Fontcuberta
 Silvia Loeue
 Florencio Sueldo
 Toni Priante
 Ines Ventos
 Cool Barcelonans
 Debbon Ayer
 Betty
 George H. Beane
 Professor Thompson
 James Shaw
 Stillman Finley
 George Andrew Johnston
 Gordon Pennoyer
 Schoolboy Actors

George Sim Johnston
 Russell Pennoyer
 JHSMOCO Salesmen
 I. Harden Rose
 Audiotape Voice
 Jonni Bassiner
 Catalan Businessman
 Gavin Kovaks
 Young Ted at Lake
 Wayne Carney
 Jack of JHSMOCO

9,115 feet
 101 minutes

Dolby stereo
 In colour
 Fotofilm Color
 Prints by
 Technicolor

American sales executive Ted Boynton lives a reclusive life in Barcelona on the rebound from a failed relationship. His US Navy cousin Fred arrives, assuming he can stay while he prepares the path for the forthcoming visit of the US Sixth Fleet. On a nighttime drive, Ted explains his decision to date only plain women in future while Fred gets irritated by some anti-American graffiti.

A car pulls up and Marta, a trade fair translator, invites them to a fancy dress party. The cousins are introduced to Aurora, who seems to fit Ted's dating criteria. Aurora invites Ted to a jazz concert but another more attractive trade fair girl, Montserrat, turns up in her place. Later, on the disco floor, they finally strike a rapport. A few weeks into their affair, Montserrat reveals that she is still living with a journalist, Ramon, in an open relationship.

A USO office is bombed, killing an American sailor who is shipped home after a short service attended by the cousins. On the celebratory Night of San Juan, Fred parades his uniform at parties and organises a samba dancing session that falls flat. Ted and Montserrat berate him but later Ted himself loses his cool when he overhears Ramon claim that the Americans probably did the bombing themselves.

Ted asks Fred to move out as Montserrat is about to move in. A country outing with Montserrat and her friends ends badly when Fred's petulant crushing of some ants is thought typical of Americans. Montserrat leaves with Ramon, ostensibly to pick up her things for the move. However, she does not return, and days later, asks to see him for a "serious talk". He responds with silence, a selling strategy known as Manoeuvre X. Montserrat moves to Paris. Ted learns that Dickie Taylor has been put in charge of sales at his head office. He assumes he is going to be fired.

Meanwhile Fred is convinced he is being followed; his paranoia increases when a newspaper article by Ramon appears, naming Fred as a likely CIA agent. Fred is shot by a motorcycle pillion rider, and hospitalised. Convinced there is a conspiracy of negligence at the hospital, Ted arranges the best possible care and a constant vigil of friends to be in attendance. Among

them is the angelic Greta. Montserrat visits and explains her disappearance. Ted meets Dickie and discovers that he is in fact being promoted. He and the recovered Fred reconcile their differences on Ted's wedding day, and Fred receives an apology from Ramon. Ted marries Greta in Barcelona's gothic cathedral.

Whit Stillman's second film is, if anything, more ambitious in scope than his impressive debut *Metropolitan*. Although set in the mid-80s heyday of post-Franco hedonistic abandon in the Catalan capital, it reaches for the complexity of theme and character of a nineteenth-century novel. The uneasy social relations incumbent on Stillman's two foreign residents, Ted and Fred, are compounded with political tensions around the US military presence in the Mediterranean. The cousins may be scions of American WASPdom, but they're anything but the 'Masters of the Universe' evoked by Tom Wolfe in *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. Their almost Victorian mixture of arrogance, awkwardness and naivety makes them more like scared young subalterns of Kipling's Raj, and they have something of the political pawns' bewilderment that Tom Stoppard gave to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. But Catalonia is hardly Elsinore or the North-West Frontier and their paranoid bleating is puzzling until it proves to be justified by the shooting of Fred.

As with *Metropolitan*, the point of view is that of the American patrician class. Thus, although alien enough for Ted and Fred, the Barcelona we see is very much restricted to its chic districts. For example, the notorious ancient red-light district of abject poverty, the Barrio Chino (where the crew of a US aircraft carrier was notoriously fleeced in the early 80s) is hardly glimpsed. Instead we get the fashionable midtown of Gaudí and Bofill, of Art Nouveau facades and minimalist dancefloors. There's no way that these American cousins are interested in slumming. They are busy representing the American conscience on an international stage and therefore a certain

decorum must be preserved, even in the disco.

Stillman pokes affectionate fun at these prissy, curious stiff. Ted's attempt to maintain a moral stance, through sexual abstinence and dancing with his bible, is besieged from all sides – as much by Fred's constant cash borrowing as by the easy-going sexuality of Spanish girlfriends. His bringing Dale Carnegie-style business philosophies to bear on his relationship with Montserrat ought to be contemptible, but instead it serves to underline his uneasiness about his own neurotic identity in the presence of her vivacity. Similarly, Fred's paranoid self-loathing wills the attempted assassination on himself, making him temporarily absent at the point where the plot needs to focus on Ted, and then vulnerable enough to gain some arguably unwarranted sympathy at the end. Such characterisation is Stillman's boldest stroke. He is unafraid to hang his carefully thought-out panorama on the shoulders of two pathetic characters, who are very hard to like or respect.

However, the cousins' lack of charm has an unfortunate impact on Stillman's overall scheme. In the generous party atmosphere that pervades the film and invades the Americans' consciousness, there is an evident desire to give a proper representation to the Spanish characters, yet it is never quite realised. We never know why the women at the trade fair, who seem an adroit and cosmopolitan crew, would want to marry any of these young Americans, beyond the fact that they are young Americans. The film comforts male angst with such assumptions. But then Stillman's world is one where there is always a thick quality overcoat ready for drooping shoulders and where quiet reasoned conversation is always the palliative for difficult twists of fate. It makes a unique and beguiling contrast to the cinema of his current American peers and if it is a shade over-ambitious, there is always the sense that, given further opportunities, he might just surpass all expectations.

Nick James



Anti-American graffiti: Taylor Nichols, Chris Eigeman

Black Beauty

United Kingdom/USA 1994

Director: Caroline Thompson

Certificate
U

Distributor
Warner Bros

Production Company
Warner Bros Pictures

Producers
Robert Shapiro
Peter MacGregor-Scott

Production Co-ordinator
Margaret Adams

Unit Production Manager
Steven Harding

Location Manager
Kevin de la Noy

2nd Unit Director
Vic Armstrong

Assistant Directors
Chris Carreras
Marcia Gay
Jamie Christopher

2nd Unit:
Chris Brock

Casting
Mary Selway
Children:
Sarah Trevis

Screenplay
Caroline Thompson
Based on the novel
by Anna Sewell

2nd Unit Continuity
Anna Worley

Script Supervisor
Nikki Clapp

Director of Photography
Alex Thompson

Nature Photography
Andrew Anderson

2nd Unit Director of Photography
David Feig

Tony Spratling
Camera Operator
John Palmer
B Camera Operator:
Nic Milner

2nd Unit:
Stefan Stankowski

Editor
Claire Simpson

Production Designer
John Box

Supervising Art Director
Les Tomkins

Art Director
Kevin Phipps

Set Decorator
Eddie Fowlie

Special Effects Supervisor
Joss Williams

Costume Design
Jenny Beavan

Wardrobe Supervisor
Janet Tebrooke

Ron Beck
Make-up
Key:
Magdalen Gaffney
Yvonne Coppard

Equine Make-up:
Victoria Jamison

Hairstylist
Colin Jamison

Title Design
Robert Dawson

Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title

Music
Danny Elfman

Music Conductor
Jack Redford

Orchestrations
Steve Bartek

Music Producer
Danny Elfman

Music Editor
Bob Badami

Music Recording Co-ordinator
Graham Walker

Supervising Sound Editor
Richard E. Yawn

Sound Editors
Glenn Hoskinson
Victor Iorlito
Kimberly Lowe Voigt

Bob Bradshaw
Rocky Moriana
Donald L. Warner
Gordon Ecker

Horse Vocals Editor
Hector Gika

Supervising Foley Editor
Mary Andrews

Supervising Foley Editor
Steve Schwalbe

ADR Editors
Holly Huckins
Joe Dorn

Foley Editor
Shawn Sykora
Fred Burke

Solange
Schwalbe-Boisseau

Sound Mixer
Simon Kaye

Foley Mixer
Marilyn Graf

Scoring Mixer
Shawn Murphy

Re-recording Mixers
Les Fresholz
Michael Herbick
Dick Alexander

Foley Artists
Ellen Heur
Kevin Bartnof

Horse Consultant
Vicki Hearne

Stunt Co-ordinator/Horse Master
Vic Armstrong

Horse Trainers
Rex Peterson
Angel Gomez
Fernandez

Jorge Casares
Mali Elfman

Carriage Wrangler
Steve Dent

Stable Manager
Bruce Armstrong

Head Groom
Jenny Dodd

Cast
Docs Keepin Time
American Quarter Horse
Black Beauty
Alan Cumming
Voice of Black Beauty
Sean Bean
Farmer Grey
David Thewlis
Jerry Barker
Jim Carter
John Manly
Peter Davison
Squire Gordon
Alun Armstrong
Reuben Smith
John McNery
Mr York
Eleanor Bron
Lady Wexmire
Peter Cook
Lord Wexmire
Adrian Ross-Magenty
Lord George
Lyndon Davies
Head Groom
Georgina Armstrong
Jessica Gordon
Gemma Paternoster
Molly Gordon
Anthony Walters
Alfred Gordon
Rosaling Ayres
Mistress Gordon
Andrew Knott
Joe Green
Sean Baker
Ostler
Bill Stewart
Coachman
Bronco McLoughlin
Vicar
Angus Barnett
Ned Burnham
David Ryall
Carriagemaker
Philip Taylor
Carriagemaker's
Assistant

Vic Armstrong
Job Horse Boss

Robert Demeger
Horse Marker Buyer

Vincent Regan
Sleazy Horse Dealer

Matthew Scurfield
Horse Dealer

Sean Blowers
Hard-faced Man

Emma Richler
Polly Barker

Keeley Flanders
Dolly Barker

Freddie White
Harry Barker

Conrad Asquith
Guv'nor Crenshaw

Patrick Burke
Dick Brannick

Paul McNeill
Graham Valentine

Graeme Alexander Young
Cabbies

Dido Miles
Dinah

Rupert Penry Jones
Wild-looking Young Man

John Quarmby
Butler

Julian Maud
Drunken Gentleman

Bronco McLoughlin
Granary Cart Driver

Bill McCabe
First Driver

Niall O'Brien
Farmer Thoroughgood

Jonathan Hirst
Willie Thoroughgood

Ian Kelsey
Joe Green (Older)

7.912 feet
88 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour
Technicolor

The late nineteenth century. An elderly stallion, at rest in a field in the English countryside, reminisces about his eventful life. Born in a lantern-lit stable on Farmer Grey's estate, he grows up into a handsome horse and is sold to Squire Gordon. The Squire's wife names him Black Beauty on account of his bright black coat. He befriends Merrylegs, a little pony, and Ginger, a red mare who was treated cruelly by a previous owner and has developed a ferocious temper.

Beauty saves the head coachman, John Manly, from drowning, but almost dies himself when stableboy Joe Green forgets to wrap him up in his rug. Joe later makes amends, rescuing Beauty and Ginger from a huge fire. The Squire leaves England, hoping his wife's health will improve in warmer climes. Black Beauty and Ginger are sold to Lady Wexmire. She is not interested in their well-being, but merely wants them to look well turned out. Beauty has a horrific accident when a drunken stableman fails to notice that he is not properly shod. His knees are so disfigured that the Wexmires no longer want him in their stables. He is sold again. He works briefly as a job horse, available for hire. Then he is bought by Jerry Barker, a kindly London cabbie. As he pounds the streets, he spots his old friend Ginger, who is also pulling a cab. She is in a pitiful state and he sees her corpse being dragged past a day or two later.

Jerry Barker is too sick to carry on his business. Beauty is taken over by a corn dealer, who makes him work till he drops. Ragged and broken, he looks certain to end up in the knacker's yard. However Joe Green buys him and sets him out to pasture. Gradually, his health and spirits return. Joe promises that he will never be sold again.

"The attraction of all stories for me is the metaphor," Caroline Thompson told *Sight and Sound* last year when asked what led her to adapt Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* for the screen. Before digging out the metaphor, though, she first needed to attend to the surface details: to capture the nuances of class, costume and behaviour in turn-of-the-century England. But this was the problem: the posh little kids in frocks and

waistcoats were posh little kids in frocks and waistcoats, however well she wrote about them.

With her debut as director, Thompson makes a second foray into Victorian children's fiction. This time, she has found more tractable material. For a start, horses and cinema go way back. Anna Sewell's novel was published in 1877, only a year before Eadweard Muybridge's famous attempt to capture a photographic record of a stallion in motion with a dozen still cameras. Then there's the story itself, a pathos-saturated tale not so very different from her own most famous script: like *Edward Scissorhands*, *Black Beauty* is an estranged hero, adopted, loved and abused by humans.

The narrative doesn't exactly rattle along. In the early scenes in particular, affairs move at a leisurely, pastoral pace: horses gambol up and down the fields, the camera picks out butterflies, snails and other assorted wildlife. These idyllic moments are interspersed with various night-time set-pieces in which the film-making style suddenly darkens and quickens, with Thompson moving into Gothic groove: a bridge collapses in a flood, there is a spectacular fire in the stables and a delirious, drunken ride through the woods.

Thompson's attitude toward the horses themselves is not always clear. On the one hand, she fetishises them, showing Black Beauty and Ginger rising on their hind legs like wild stallions and galloping at vast speed across the verdant pastures. To look at, they're powerful, primitive animals who slightly scare the humans they come into contact with. (In this respect, *Black Beauty* echoes Carroll Ballard's equally pagan *The Black Stallion*.) On the other hand, anthropomorphism holds sway. Beauty recounts his own story in flashback, Alan Cumming's childlike voice making him sound like an excitable schoolboy on an outing to the seaside.

Sewell's novel was written "to induce kindness, sympathy and an understanding treatment of horses," and was distributed by animal rights campaigners as well as booksellers. Forget the fact that Black Beauty is a horse, and it reads like a variation of *David Copperfield* or *Oliver Twist*. It's full of Dickensian archetypes: the stableboy, the cab-driver, the squire and the haughty, affected aristocrat. This world has been evoked again and again by the movies. There's nothing especially original in this vision of nineteenth century England, but costumes and production design are handsome enough, and there are enjoyable character turns from Jim Carter, Alun Armstrong and David Thewlis.

Perhaps Thompson's adaptation is a little staid; it keeps close to the original, with no Tim Burton-like flights of fancy to leaven matters. Still, she preserves the ingenuous, wide-eyed innocence which made Sewell's story so effective in the first place. The sentiment may be cloying, but it's hard not to admire the film-making.

Geoffrey Macnab

Clean, Shaven

USA 1993

Director: Lodge Kerrigan

Certificate
Not yet issued

Distributor
ICA

Production Company
DSM III Films

Executive Producer
J. Dixon Byrne

Producer
Lodge Kerrigan

Associate Producer
Melissa Painter

New York Production Co-ordinator
Catherine O'Brien

Production Manager
Miscou Island:
Grace Vibert

New York:
Melissa Painter
Alexandra Nevins

Assistant Directors
Miscou Island:
Eliot Rockett

New York:
Antek Walczak
Matthew Boccaccio

Screenplay
Lodge Kerrigan

Script Supervisor
Fernando Alcalde

Director of Photography
Teodoro Maniaci

Editor
Jay Rabinowitz
Rough Cut Film Editor:
Megan Agosto

Production Designer
Tania Ferrier

Set Dresser
Jose Claudio

Special Make-up Effects
Rob Benevides

Titles/Opticals
Laszlo McKenzie

Music
Hahn Rowe

Additional Sound Design
Michael Parsons

Supervising Sound Editor
Tony Martinez

Sound Editors
Jac Rubenstein
Bill Sweeney

ADR Recordists
Michael Parsons
Brad Beckman

Foley Recordist
Brian Langman

Sound Mixers
Miscou Island:
John Kelsey
Matthew Perry

New York:
Michael Parsons

Re-recording Mixer
David Novack

Foley Artist
Marko A. Costanzo

Cast
Peter Greene
Peter Winter
Molly Castellone
Melinda Frayne
Megan Owen
Mrs Winter
Robert Albert
Jack McNally
Jennifer MacDonald
Nicole
Alicia Levitt
Girl with Ball
Jill Chamberlain
Teenager at Motel
Agathe Leclerc
Murdered Girl
Rogot Joly
Police Photographer
René Beaudin
Boy on Bicycle
J. Dixon Byrne
Dr Michaels
Eliot Rockett
Man on Ladder
Angela Vibert
Karen MacDonald
Girls in Rain
Lee Kayman
Bartender
Peter Lucas
Drunk
Rob Benevides
Robber
Ismael Ramirez
Psychotic Derelict
Marty Clinis
Ruth Gottheimer
Library Patrons
June Kelly
Librarian
Grace Vibert
Schoolteacher
James Hance
Man in Adoption Agency
Marti Wilkerson
Adoption Agent
Michael Benson
Eliot Rockett
Men in Jeep
Cathleen Biro
Harlan Hamilton
Drunks
Lily Neumeyer
Patrick Byrne
Andy Janjigian
Jessica Pymm
John Kelsey
David Pymm
John Cronin
Kenneth Pymm
Yvonne McDonald
Brian Pymm
Melissa Painter
Vanessa Miller
Additional Voices

3,000 feet
80 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour
Prints by
DuArt Film
Laboratories
16mm

Peter Winter, a schizophrenic just out of an institution, goes in search of his young daughter Nicole. After the death of his wife and during his incarceration, Peter's mother Gladys had sent the child for adoption. Nicole now lives with Melinda Frayne, who works on a fishing boat on the Atlantic coastline, in Canada. Peter stops off at a motel, where he cuts his face and body with a razor. The next day he continues to his mother's house; she receives him without warmth.

Peter is being trailed by detective Jack McNally, who suspects him of being a killer. The mutilated body of a young girl is found near the motel where Peter stayed, and there are bloodstains in the room he occupied. Peter visits a library and looks up books on gifted children; his unbalanced behaviour alarms the librarian, who later reports it to McNally.

When Melinda and Nicole visit Gladys, Peter is watching the house and follows them home. Approaching Nicole, playing by herself in the garden, he reveals himself as her father and takes her to the beach. On the deserted shore he tries to explain his torment to her. McNally shows up; thinking Peter is harming the child, he shoots him dead. Later McNally broods in a bar, while Nicole tries to contact her father on the boat's radio.

● The above synopsis, being linear and explicit, misrepresents *Clean, Shaven*. Plot elements in Lodge Kerrigan's film are conveyed piecemeal and obliquely, mostly through the turmoil of interference that clogs Peter Winter's mind. Few films have succeeded so convincingly in putting us inside a schizophrenic's head, making us feel what it's like to be battered and wrenched by a jumble of uncontrollable impulses. More than once Winter turns on his car radio but we can scarcely hear it, drowned out as it is by the angry voices, harsh metallic noises and buzz of static in his brain, tuned in to a whole world of pitiless aggression. The visuals are equally abrupt and fragmented, strewn with bleak, near-monochrome images of concrete and rusted metal. It's like a jigsaw puzzle where all the pieces have jagged edges and none of them fit.

What makes the film even more disturbing is that while adopting the *Fugitive*-style formula of innocent man hunted by relentless cop, it never allows us the comforting certainty that Winter really is innocent. Early on, as he sits in his car, a ball bounces against the windscreen; a young girl peers worriedly in; and Winter gets out. The cam-

era holds on the empty car while on the soundtrack we hear a child's screams. A savage beating for a trivial offence – or more of Winter's tormented aural memories? No way of telling, any more than we know whether he killed the girl found near the motel. McNally's viewpoint is no guide, since he's almost as unbalanced as his quarry. Their actions often run parallel and in the end, as if by transference, the detective's mind is invaded by the same noises that plagued Winter.

Clean, Shaven might seem mannered but for the tortured intensity of Peter Greene in the central role – a performance all the more impressive given that the film had to be shot over a period of two years. Greene frighteningly creates the sense of a man hounded by unendurable self-loathing, unable even to face the gaze of mirrors (which he tapes over, smashes or turns to the wall) and careering helplessly towards destruction. "If I could just slow down a little bit," he wistfully tells Nicole, "I could come up with a solution." Instead he takes out his agony on inanimate objects, himself and – perhaps – other people, and in one near-unwatchable scene prides off one of his fingernails with a knife and gouges around in the wound.

Occasionally we get a hint of a certain skewed reasoning behind Winter's behaviour. He was an abnormally gifted, solitary child, his mother tells McNally (a pattern Winter is alarmed to see repeating in his daughter), and his self-mutilation stems from believing he has a radio receiver in his head and a transmitter in his finger. But so effectively are we drawn into his fractured world that these attempts at explanation feel like an intrusion, a muting of the film's inarticulate howl. This apart, the strength of Kerrigan's first feature lies in its refusal to compromise, to make things easy or pleasant for the viewer; as such, it's a stark riposte to the string of recent Hollywood movies depicting the mentally damaged as founts of simple wisdom.

Philip Kemp

Dallas Doll

USA 1994

Director: Ann Turner

Certificate

18

Distributor

Metro Tartan

Production Company

Dallas Doll Productions

In association with

Australian

Broadcasting

Corporation

BBC Films

With assistance from

Australian Film

Commission

Australian Film

Finance Corporation

PTY Ltd

Executive Producers

Penny Chapman

BBC:

George Faber

Producer

Ross Matthews

Co-producers

Ann Turner

Tatiana Kennedy

Line Producer

Barbara Gibbs

Associate Producers

Sue Masters

Ray Brown

BBC Production Executive

Juliet Grimm

ABC Production Controller

Malcolm Smith

Production Co-ordinator

Lisa Scott

Production Manager

Annette Gover

Unit Production Manager

John Downie

Location Manager

Peter Lawless

Post-production

Co-ordinators

Lisa Scott

Carol Chirlian

Assistant Directors

Adrian Pickersgill

Keith Heygate

Vicki Hastrich

Francesca Belli

Casting

Liz Mulliner

Associate:

Annousha Zarkesh

Screenplay

Ann Turner

Script Consultant

Sue Smith

Continuity

Suzanne Brown

Director of Photography

Paul Murphy

Camera Operator

David Williamson

Digital Optical Effects

Robert Sanderman

Steven Roberts

Jim Whitlam

Editor

Michael Honey

Production Designer

Marcus North

Art Director

Kerrie Reay

Set Dressers

Robert Hutchinson

Sandra Carrington

Scenic Artists

Paul Brocklebank

James Robertson

Thomas Sutomo

Storyboard Artist

Peter Pound

Special Effects

Chris Murray

Ray Towler

Additional:

Peter Leggett

John Neale

Costume Design

Rosalea Hood

Wardrobe Co-ordinators

Rita Crouch

Julie Middleton

Make-up/Hairstylist

Chiara Tripodi

Prosthetic Make-up

Bob McCarron

Title Design

Kim Hamilton

Titles/Opticals

Optical & Graphic

Music

David Hirschfelder

Music Consultant

Christine Woodruff

Chamber Music

Consultant:

Ric Formosa

Music Performed by

John Barrett

Tommy Emmanuel

Stuart Fraser

Gerry Hale

John Watson

Steve Williams

Willy Zygiar

String Quartet:

Kirsty Bremer

Trevor Jones

Robert Macindoe

Sarah Morse

Opera Singers:

Domenic Allesia

Patrizia de Carlo

Miriam Gormley

David Hobson

Robert Lenke

Robyn Slater

Music Notation Editor

Ric Formosa

Sam Schwartz

Digital Music Editor

Michael Costa

Songs

"Move Over Darling"

by Joe Lubin, Harry

Kamter, Terry Melcher,

performed by Doris

Day; "A Woman's

Touch" by Sammy Fair,

Paul Francis Webster,

performed by Doris

Day; "I Scare Myself"

by Ann Turner, David

Hirschfelder,

performed by Fiona

Maynard, David

Hirschfelder; "The

Cake and the Candle"

by and performed by

Paul Kelly; "High Above

the Mountain" by Peter

Bowman, performed

by Sugo Wavo; "Dog-

Tide" by Ann Turner,

David Hirschfelder,

performed by Tiddas

Sound Supervisor

Wayne Pashley

Sound

Nicholas Wood

Dialogue Editors

Peter Hall

Dorothy Welch

ADR Editor

Jacomiene Betlem

Foley Editor

Ian Neilson

Foley and ADR Recordist

Eric Briggs

Music Recordist/Mixer

Michael Letho

Sound Mixers

Gethin Creagh

Peter Purcell

Dolby stereo

consultant:

Stephen Murphy

Sound Effects Editors

Fabian Sanjurjo

Antony Gray

Vetinary Adviser

Stephen Watson

Stunt Co-ordinators

Zef Eletheriou

Rocky McDonald

Armourer

Robert Colby

Dog Wrangler

Steve Austin

Cast
Sandra Bernhard
Dallas
Victoria Longley
Rosalind Sommers
Frank Gallagher
Stephen Sommers
Jake Blundell
Charlie Sommers
Rose Byrne
Rastus Sommers
Jonathon Leahy
Eddy
Douglas Hedge
Mayor Tonkin
Melissa Thomas
Margaret
Elaine Lee
Mrs Winthrop
Walter Sullivan
Elderly Councillor
William Usic
Minister
Alethea McGrath
Aunt Mary
Roy Billing
Dave Harry
John Frawley
Mr Fellowes
Ken Senga
Mr Kurosawa
Kuni Hashimoto
Mr Ozu
Denis Mackay
Farmer
Laura Bentley
Stewardess
Sally Cahill
Mother
Hannah O'Brien
Little Girl

John Hinde
Uncle Henry
Roseann McDonald
Shop Assistant
Eva Di Cesare
Vet
Margie McCrae
Thelma Tonkin
Phillip Adams
Margaret Throsby
Robert Lee
Radio Announcers
Luke Carroll
Alan Campbell
Boys
David Ngombujarra
Storyteller
Bob Lovett
Deaf Interpreter
Yukari Tanimura
Japanese Translator
Yumiko Iwanaga
Mrs Ozu
Celia Ireland
Policewoman
Claire Gow
Joan Baker
Tanya McMillan
Mary Lindsay
City Clinic Women
Bobby
Argus

9,360 feet
104 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour
Eastman

● Flying home to Australia from New York, teenager Charlie Sommers is captivated by a fellow passenger, Dallas. He finds that she has been hired as a golfing instructor at the club in the Sydney suburbs where Charlie lives. Charlie's mother Rosalind attends Dallas' classes and invites her home for dinner. While demonstrating her golfing technique, Dallas hits the family dog, Argus, who retaliates by going for her leg. Incapacitated, Dallas convalesces at the Sommers home. Only Charlie's younger sister Rastus objects to this.

Rosalind confides to Dallas that her happiest days were those spent as a child on her aunt Mary's farm. Their mutual attraction heightens when they play strip crazy golf together, seen by a shocked Rastus. Argus has to have an operation which causes Rastus to loathe Dallas even more. Dallas recovers but is invited to stay for longer. As a surprise treat she takes Rosalind to her Aunt Mary's farm. Mary is going to India and wants to sell to Rosalind. Dallas has plans for an adjacent golf course. Rosalind's husband Stephen knows about all this and has already drawn up a business plan.

Dallas and Rosalind take on the farm and Charlie and Rastus are packed off to boarding school. On one of their visits, Charlie goes out riding with Dallas and is seduced by her. He takes time off school to tell his father, only to find his Dad with Dallas, and he runs away. Meanwhile, Dallas develops a new power base in the town near the farm.

In Sydney, Charlie finds work at the funfair and keeps in contract with Rastus. Dallas suggests a golfing empire designed to attract the Japanese and sees off resistance from the locals. At the opening ceremony, Rosalind tells Stephen that she is in love with Dallas, but is repelled by his ►



Playground twist: Jennifer MacDonald



Tee'd off: Sandra Bernhard

acquiescence. One night, Charlie, now a successful golfing coach himself, returns home to find his mother is living with Dallas. Snooping around in her room, he discovers that Dallas is not who she claims to be. Later he confronts her.

Knowing his mother will discover them, Charlie makes out with Dallas. Rosalind reacts by closing down the golf club and turfing Dallas out. That night Rastus sights a UFO, which creates a large crater in the middle of the farm. Dallas falls into the crater and is trampled to death by a herd of marauding cows released by Argus. Everyone but Rastus mourns Dallas' death. Rosalind and Stephen go their separate ways. Charlie tries to persuade his mother to sell the farm. Rosalind ripostes that she has finally found what makes her happy and no-one is going to take it away from her.

As has already been noted elsewhere, this story of a wily interloper who inveigles her way into the hearts and beds of an affluent family bears a striking resemblance to Pasolini's *Theorem*. But Pasolini's more rigorous structure is here turned into a droll and imaginative, if somewhat uneven satire that aims at an array of targets from suburban mores to a nation's inferiority complex. "Australia is not as good as America", enthuses a smitten Charlie. Dallas makes this weakness for the Stars and Stripes her own as she crash-lands in the Sydney suburbs and sets herself up as a golfing guru whose strange technique requires less practice on the links than revealing group psycho-babble sessions.

Immediately, we know that all is not quite right. Bernhard has never quite shaken off the edgy persona of Masha in *The King of Comedy*. The fabulist Dallas, wowing the Sommers family with stories of her parents' sad demise in a drowning accident, is like a Masha who wields her madness to more useful effect. Coming from Bernhard, such lines as "This wombat is just delicious, Rosalind," are delectably ridiculous. But its not just Bernhard's presence that unsettles. Everything is wrong from the moment on the plane when Dallas takes Charlie's girlfriend's seat

and refuses to budge. Later a matron is seen running from Dallas' first session, while the golf-club groundsman grinds snails into the crazy paving. This is suburban gothic à la David Lynch, where appliances such as water hoses tend to wriggle like lethal snakes.

As with her first feature *Celia*, Turner demonstrates a keen eye for the uncanny, as the cracks in the middle-class world are prised open. On the occasion of Charlie's disappearance, his headmaster warns the Sommers to expect the worst as he explains the increase in rent-boy trade in the city: "You'd be surprised how many respectably married middle-class men are lured by pretty boys." Meanwhile in the Sommers household, notions of a sexual orthodoxy have already been thrown into disarray as Dallas manages to seduce everybody but Rastus and the dog. By the end of *Dallas Doll*, Stephen is getting his kicks by stubbing out cigarettes on himself.

Everyone has an investment in fantasy. Charlie, Rosalind and Dallas each supply their own dream sequence. This might also be the first film to feature a dog's nightmare (although *Neighbours* once devoted an entire episode to a dog's fantasy), as Argus, in a post-operative stupor, imagines himself to be tearing apart a china doll. Meanwhile Rastus and Eddy (her slacker boyfriend of few words) are obsessed with UFOs, crop circles and the strange twists of fate that make their way into the likes of the *Fortean Times*.

This preoccupation with the paranormal is overtly contrasted with Dallas' business and pleasure philosophy that you make everything your own – a lesson that only Rosalind succeeds in following (and with Victoria Longley's brilliant performance, the film ends up belonging to her). At the same time there is an analogy to be drawn – for what else is Dallas but some weird outside force bearing down on gullible Aussie folk (naturally Rastus, Eddy and Argus are the only disbelievers). Unfortunately, the *deus ex machina* finale is one flight of fantasy too much – its low-budget effects owing more to Ed Wood than Stephen Spielberg – but at least it's in keeping with the film's spirit of Sydney kitsch.

Lizzie Francke

George Balanchine's The Nutcracker

USA 1993

Director: Emile Ardolino

Certificate

U

Distributor

Warner Bros

Production Companies

Elektra Entertainment/

Regency Enterprises

Executive Producer

Arnon Milchan

Producers

Robert A. Krasnow

Robert Hurwitz

Line Producer

Catherine Tatge

Associate Producer

Amy Schatz

Production Executives

Gary Casson

Donna Goldstein

Strugatz

Bobby Daly

Production Supervisor

Dominique Lasseur

Production Co-ordinators

Merrill Brockway

Karina Beznicki

Unit Production Manager

Thomas Reilly

Location Co-ordinator

Jennifer Fong

Post-production Supervisor

Marianne Bower

Assistant Directors

Thomas Reilly

Rebecca Saionz

Casting

Peter Martins

Adapted from the stage production by

Peter Martins

From the story by

E.T.A. Hoffman

Narration

Susan Cooper

Script Supervisor

Anne Gyory

Director of Photography

Ralf Bode

Optical Photography Supervisor

Bruce Vecchitto

Bluescreen Director of Photography

Kim Marks

Lighting Design

Alan Adelman

Camera Operators

Michael Stone

Peter Norman

John Sosenko

Motion Control:

Peter Daulton

Optical:

Jeff Doran

Effects:

Jim Hagedorn

Steadicam Operator

Larry McConkey

Special Visual Effects

Industrial Light & Magic

Supervisor:

Eric Brevig

Producer:

Kim Bromley

Art Director:

Doug Chiang

Editor:

Bill Kimberlin

Executive in Charge of Production:

Patricia Blau

Digital Artist

Peg Hunter

Optical Line-up

Jennifer Lee

Computer Graphic Animator

Thomas L. Hutchinson

Editor

Girish Bhargava

Production Designer/Scenery

Rouben Ter-Arutunian

Scenic Artists

Arnold Abramson

Mark Nissenholtz

Ian Zdatny

Visual Effects:

Gwen Thoele

Mouse King Head Design

Holly Hynes

Mice Costume Special Effects

Martin Izquierdo

Pyrotechnics Supervisor

Bob Finley Jr

Costume Design

Karinska

Wardrobe Supervisors

Larch Miller

Leslie Copeland

Make-up

Craig Lyman

Hairstylists

Roy Bryson

Pamela Priest

John Quaglia

Betty Lou Skinner

Title Design

R/Greenberg

Associates West

Music

Pyotr Ilyitch

Tchaikovsky

Music Performed by

New York City Ballet

Orchestra

Music Conductor

David Zinman

Music Producer

John McClure

Music Supervisor

Albert Lee

Music Editor

Paul Zinman

Music Production Co-ordinator

Crala Capretto

Choreography

George Balanchine

Ballet Master-in-chief

Peter Martins

Ballet Mistress

Rosemary Dunleavy-

Maslow

Children's Ballet Mistress

Garielle Whittle

Sound Design

Randy Thom

Sound Editor

Dennis Leonard

Sound Mixer

Frank Stettner

Sound Re-recorders

John McClure

Randy Thom

Bill W. Benton

Dennis Leonard

Foley Artists

Robin Harlan

Ellen Heuer

Teresa Reyes

Technical Co-ordinator

Jay Millard

Technical Supervisor

Perry Silvey

Cast

Kevin Kline

Narrator

Macaulay Culkin

Nutcracker

Bart Robinson Cook

Herr Drosselmeier

Jessica Lynn Cohen

Marie

Barci Kistler

Sugarplum Fairy

Damian Woetzel

Cavalier

Kyra Nichols

Dewdrop

Wendy Whelan

Coffee

Margaret Tracey

Marzipan

Gen Horuchi

Tea

Tom Gold

Sugar Cane

Lourdes Lopez

Nilas Martins

Hot Chocolate

William Otto

Mother Ginger

Peter Reznick

Fritz

Karin von Aroldingen

Edward Bigelow

Grandparents

Robert Lafosse

Dr Stahlbaum

Heather Watts

Frau Stahlbaum

Katrina Killian

Harlequin

Roma Sosenko

Columbine

Michael Byars

Soldier

Robert Lyon

Mouse King

Helene Alexopoulos

Lauren Hauser

Melinda Roy

Stephanie Saland

Simone Schumacher

Deborah Wingert

Lindsay Fischer

Kipling Houston

Peter Naumann

Alexandre Proia

Jock Soto

Erlends Zieminch

Parents

Kimberly Cortes

Eve Harrison

Petra Hoernner

Miriam Peterson

Ashley Siebert

Kiellie Young

Misha Braun

Alexander Levine

Igor Odessky

Andrei Vitoptov

Alex Wiesendanger

Children

Priscilla Pellicchia

Robert Wersinger

Teenagers

Zippora Karz

Julie Michael

Maid

Emily Coates

Wendy Drapala

Elizabeth Brucker

Amanda Edge

Michele Gifford

Pauline Golbin

Dena Kinstlinger

Margo Krody

Anna Licca

Andrea Long

Zoe Mackler

Deanna McBrearty

Catherine Ryan

Pascale Van Kipnis

Elizabeth Walker

Miranda Weese

Snowflakes

Janey McGeary

Sabrina Pillars

Teresa Reyes

Santhe Tsatsilas

Albert Evans

Russell Kaiser

Gordon Stevens

Runsheng Ying

Hot Chocolate

Miriam Mahdavian

Immaculada Velez

Tea

Yvonne Barree

much-loved production of the Tchaikovsky masterpiece, it is for the most part admirably straightforward and respectful of composer and choreographer's intentions. Yet the casting of Macaulay Culkin in the key child role of old uncle Drosselmeier's heroic nephew at times adds a 'crossover' spin to the proceedings. His presence, although doubtless intended as a hook for parents and kids alike who might otherwise be turned off by the notion of a full-length classical ballet comes off as something of an awkward distraction, with the attention-grabbing *modus operandi* of the Hollywood child star chafing against the ensemble tradition of the ballet company.

That said, Culkin's appearance can't be completely ascribed to the synergistic connivance of the marketing department, for in his previous life as a mere mortal, 'Mac' - then a student at the School of American Ballet - took part in the NYCB productions of 1988 and 1989. Then, significantly, he was cast in the bit part of the brattish Fritz, who petulantly smashes the magical nutcracker in the first act prelude to the fantasy adventure later undertaken by Marie and Drosselmeier's nephew, himself in turn revealed as the Nutcracker Prince. It is in the latter role - which father Kit Culkin performed with the same company in the 50s - that we now find the million-salaried *Home Alone* star. He has a small mime element to deliver and does so with neither more nor less accomplishment than you might expect from any ordinary member of the *corps de ballet* - it's only the half-smirking close-ups that become rather cloying after a while.

Culkin apart, the only other aspect of the film to be less than seamlessly integrated is the accompanying narration, an attempt to clarify Tchaikovsky and Hoffmann's slightly episodic fantasy for a wider audience. Cheerily intoned by Kevin Kline, it is rather over-obvious, telling us what we can see already (apparently Culkin *père* was so outraged he withdrew his son from proposed promotional duties).

Industrial Light and Magic provide only a fantastically growing Christmas tree and the flying bed which whisks Marie and the nephew to the snowy land of the Sugar Plum Fairy. For the rest, the use of the sets and costumes familiar from NYCB's annual Balanchine revival sets the seal on a generally faithful screen preservation of a long-running seasonal favourite in the Big Apple. Even non-balletomanes could hardly fail to be impressed by the grace and discipline of Darci Kistler's Sugar Plum Fairy, the high spirits of Tom Gold's leaping Sugar Cane or the controlled exuberance of the 'Dance of the Snowflakes', while David Zinman conducts the NYCB orchestra in a slow-starting but climactically resplendent reading of an endlessly delightful score. All in all, this *Nutcracker* stands as the sort of holiday treat for well-behaved children that the adults will enjoy just as much as, if not more than their young charges.

Trevor Johnston

Heavenly Creatures

New Zealand 1994

Director: Peter Jackson

Certificate

18

Distributor

Buena Vista

Production Company

Wingnut Films
Fontana Film
Production GmbH
In association with
The New Zealand Film
Commission

Executive Producer

Hanno Huth

Producer

Jim Booth

Co-producer

Peter Jackson

Line Producer

Bridget Bourke

Production Co-ordinator

Jacqui Wood

Production Manager

Honor Byrne

Unit Production Manager

Graham Thompson

Location Manager

Martin Long

Post-production Supervisor

Jamie Selkirk

Assistant Directors

Carolynne

Cunningham

Phee Phanshell

Emma Johns

Casting

UK:

John and Ros Hubbard

New Zealand:

Liz Mullane

Screenplay

Frances Walsh

Peter Jackson

Continuity

Lynn-Maree Dansey

Director of Photography

Alun Bollinger

Steadicam Operator

John Mahaffie

Video Diary

Amanda Jenkins

Nigel Blunk

Digital Effects

George Port

Editor

Jamie Selkirk

Production Designer

Grant Major

Art Director

Jill Cormack

Set Dresser

Meryl Cronin

Scenic Artist

Ian McDonald

Storyboard Artist

Christian Rivers

Sculptures

Maurice Quin

Bodhi Vincent

Rob Gordon

James Johnston

Miniatures Supervisor

Richard Taylor

Costume Design

Ngila Dickson

Wardrobe Supervisor

Pauline Lewis

Make-up/Hair

Marjorie Hamlin

Debbie Watson

Prosthetic Effects

Richard Taylor

Borovnian Prosthetics

and Suit Effects

Designer:

Richard Taylor

Co-ordinator:

Tania Rodger

Wig Maker

Cheryl Newton

Titles/Opticals

Sue Newton

Music

Peter Dasant

Music Performed by

Auckland

Philharmonia

Orchestra

Additional Music:

Peter Dasant

Music Conductor

Peter Scholes

Orchestrations

Bob Young

Music Supervisor

Chris Gough

Songs/Music Extracts

"Be My Love" by

Brotsky, Cahn, "The

Donkey Serenade"

by Friml, Stothart,

Wright, Forrest,

"Funiculi, Funicula"

by Turco, Denza, "The

Loveliest Night of the

Year" by Aaronson,

Webster, Rosas, "You'll

Never Walk Alone" by

Rogers, Hammerstein,

performed by Mario

Lanza; "How Much is

That Doggie in the

Window" by Merrill;

"Just A Closer Walk

With Thee" performed

by choirs of Burnside

High School, Cashmere

High School, Hagley

Community College,

Villa Maria College;

"E Lucevan le Stelle"

by Puccini, performed

by Peter Dvorsky; "Sono

Andati" from "La

Bohème" by Giacomo

Puccini, performed

by the Hungarian

State Opera

Sound Editors

Michael Hopkins

Greg Bell

ADR/Foley Recordist

Michael Jones

Sound Recordist

Hammond Peck

Sound Mixer

Michael Hedges

Cast

Melanie Lynskey

Pauline Parker

Kate Winslet

Juliet Hulme

Sarah Peirse

Honora

Diana Kent

Hilda

Clive Morrison

Henry

Simon O'Connor

Herbert

Jed Brophy

John/Nicholas

Peter Elliott

Bill Perry

Gilbert Goldie

Dr Bennett

Geoffrey Heath

Rev Norris

Kirsti Ferry

Wendy

Ben Skjellerup

Jonathon

Barren Takle

Miss Stewart

Elizabeth Moody

Miss Waller

Liz Mullane

Mrs Collins

Moreen Eason

Mrs Stevens

Pearl Carpenter

Mrs Swartz

Lou Dobson

Grandma Parker

Jesse Griffin

Laurie

Glen Drake

Steve

Nick Farra

Chris Clarkson

Boards

Ray Henwood

John Nicoll

Mike Maxwell

Professors

Raewyn Pelham

Laura

Toni Jones

Agnes Ritchie

Glenys Lloyd-Smith

Miss Digby

Wendy Watson

Mrs Bennett

Jean Guerin

Orson Welles

Stephen Reilly

Mario Lanza

Andrea Sanders

Diello

Ben Fransham

Charles

Jessica Bradley

Pauline, aged 5

Alex Shirlcliffe-Scott

Juliet, aged 5

Barry Thomson

Farmer/Policeman

8,820 feet

98 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Eastman

The 1950s. Two blood-spattered schoolgirls run into the garden of a suburban house, crying out "mother's terribly hurt". The true story of how Pauline Parker and Juliet Hulme got to this traumatic point begins in 1953, with Juliet's first day at Christchurch Girls' High School. Pauline, a native New Zealander who has been at the school some time, is a loner until she is put with Juliet, a new girl from England. Despite their very different backgrounds, the two strike up an immediate and exclusive rapport. They are linked by their childhood illnesses, their adulation of the tenor Mario Lanza and the fantasy world they create together: the non-Christian Fourth World of "music, art and pure enjoyment".

For Christmas, Pauline is given a diary in which she documents her life with Juliet and the imaginative realm of the "novel" that they embark on together. The mythical Borovnia, a medieval tale of King Charles and Queen Debora, soon consumes their real existence. When they discover, as Juliet puts it, the "key" to the Fourth World, the extra part of the human brain that only ten people possess, this is where they escape to as fantasy and actuality become interchangeable.

At school one day, Juliet is rushed to a clinic to be treated for a recurrence of her TB. Despite their daughter's illness, the Hulmes spend the summer months in England, leaving Juliet alone. Separated for two months, Juliet and Pauline write to each other as Charles and Debora, and when Pauline is allowed to visit she tells her that John, the student lodging in her house, is madly in love with her. Despite Juliet's protestations that this has broken her heart, Pauline allows John into her bed, only to be discovered by her father, who throws him out. However, she later loses her virginity to John.

On their return to New Zealand, Juliet's parents begin to sense that the friendship with Pauline may be unhealthy. The girls' time together is rationed and Pauline is sent to a psychiatrist. Due to the separation from Juliet, Pauline's schoolwork suffers. She decides to train as a typist, but meanwhile the two plot their escape to Hollywood where they hope to sell the rights to their novel. Juliet finds her mother in bed with another man, precipitating divorce proceedings from her father. It is decided that Juliet will

stay with South African relatives; the girls' anguish at the prospect of separation reaches hysterical proportions. Pauline stops speaking to her parents and Juliet begs for Pauline to be allowed to go with her to South Africa. As compensation, Pauline is permitted to stay at the Hulmes' house; the girls sleep together and plan the murder of Honora, Pauline's mother. When the day arrives, the girls take Honora out to a local park where they hit her repeatedly over the head with a brick.

Captions tell us that the girls were found guilty of murder in what came to be known as the Parker-Hulme affair. They were released in 1959 on the condition that they never met again.

When she arrives at Christchurch High School, Juliet is brought into Pauline's French class, superciliously eyeing a sea of pupils with cardboard name tags tied around their necks - a penchant of the mistress who makes her classes use French names rather than their own. This kooky small-town 50s, with its obsolete rituals and garish pastel shades, forms the backdrop for what is essentially an exploration of the captivating and bizarre world of that even kookier phenomenon, the imaginative, pubescent schoolgirl. Like Tom Kalin's *Swoon*, Peter Jackson's film abandons the conventional investigative route and approaches a true-life murder case via the obsessive, private relationship between its central characters. Juliet and Pauline shroud themselves in a world of ritual and fantasy which increasingly severs its ties with the conformity of what lies outside, eventually repositioning 50s Christchurch as one of the characters in their jointly conceived novel. Juliet and Pauline, the self-designated Heavenly Creatures of the title, script their own rites of passage, from kneeling at an altar to worship-worthy men to solemnly burning their Mario Lanza record collection on a funeral pyre after hitting upon the idea of killing off Honora.

Heavenly Creatures is a beautifully choreographed descent into the realm of the personal and therefore (to an outsider) the inexplicable. Initially we observe with curious detachment as the girls strip down to their underwear and dance around trees to a lush Lanza soundtrack proclaiming, "She's the one for me"; but we are then jolted into their 'Fourth World', the real hills dissolving into their ornamental fantasy paradise. Such literalising of characters' fantasy worlds can have embarrassing results, as it did in *Sirens*, which made one wish that people never allowed their deepest sexual desires to surface at all. What disciplines the excesses of *Heavenly Creatures* is that the subconscious sequences are always clearly located within the teenage imaginations that concoct them; they're not some abstract, ashamedly adult vision of what Peter Jackson might assume constitutes dreamland.

It's significant, for instance, that Borovnia surfaces in both everyday life and the life of fantasy. In one ►

◀ evocative scene, Juliet and Pauline – as Charles and Debora – are going through the birth of their son in the prosaic setting of Juliet's bedroom, a scene reminiscent of many a childish piece of role-playing. Scenes such as this (and the use of Pauline's diary entries as voice-over) ground the more outrageous flights of fancy into the animated Borovnia, a medieval castle populated by plasticine figures. Perhaps most compelling and disquieting are the sequences in which the two worlds collide, as when Juliet imagines a figure decapitating a visiting vicar.

Whereas most films that deal with the relationship between the real and the unconscious (from *Spellbound* to *Sirens*) never lose sight of the dividing line between the two, *Heavenly Creatures* dwells on the smudging of those boundaries. The film's most intense, lyrical and absurd moment comes near the end, when Juliet mouths along to a Lanza aria, as a monochrome sequence shows her family united and happy. Although the film assiduously avoids making any definite comment about the girls' morality, their sanity or their motivation for the killing, such scenes capture the strange euphoric loneliness of their world of sword-bearers, matinee idols and self-glorification. As the girls repeatedly pummel Honora on the head, the vibrantly coloured violence is intercut with more black and white, now showing Juliet on a ship, joyously cocooned between her parents and waving to Pauline on the quayside. These are the last shots of the film, which ends therefore not with a neat return to where it began, but with an enigmatic, elliptical allusion to an emotional and psychological turmoil that remains unresolved.

This single idealised image sums up the strange sense of distance which pervades *Heavenly Creatures*: a distance which extends beyond the obvious separation between reality and fantasy, to touch on such diverse things as Pauline's detached third-person diary descriptions of "these lovely two" or the way in which the camera, although often showing the girls in extreme close-up, always gives the impression of observing, of trying to understand but never quite getting there. Accompanying the details of the girls' sentence and subsequent release is Lanza's rendition of "You'll Never Walk Alone", at once poignant and puzzling. For all its sensuousness, its detail and its affection, *Heavenly Creatures* leaves Juliet and Pauline as mysterious as they were at the beginning. Although difficult to attribute, this is somehow the source of the film's brilliance; without casting judgment over the girls' actions, it never seeks to explain them. After Pauline and Juliet sleep together, the diary entry refers to "the joy of that thing called sin", which could be read as being specifically about sex or about everything besides. The whole film is a breathtaking blend of the particular and the opaque, a deft juggling act with the two undefinable notions of joy and sin.

Stella Bruzzi

Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles

USA 1994

Director: Neil Jordan

Certificate

18

Distributor

Warner Bros

Production Company

Geffen Pictures

Producers

David Geffen

Stephen Woolley

Executive in Charge of Production

Bonnie Lee

Co-producer

Redmond Morris

Production Co-ordinator

Janine Lodge

Paris:

Joanny Carpentier

Unit Production Manager

London:

Philip Kohler

New Orleans:

Chris Brigham

Paris:

Jean-Pierre Avive

San Francisco:

John Engel

Location Manager

Nick Daubeny

New Orleans:

Bart Weinrich

Stephanie Samuel

San Francisco:

Gail Stempler

Paris:

Sandrine Ageorges

Post-production Co-ordinator

Amanda Posey

2nd Unit Director

Rob Legato

New Orleans:

James Davis

Assistant Directors

Patrick Clayton

Michael Stevenson

Joe Burns

Mark Clayton

New Orleans:

Susan Fiore

Paul Bernard

Paris:

Jean Philippe Blime

Dominique Delany

Casting

Juliet Taylor

Susie Figgis

New Orleans:

Sandy Dawes

Screenplay

Anne Rice

Based on her novel

Script Supervisor

Diana Dill

Director of Photography

Philippe Rousselot

Paris:

Rob Legato

Camera Operator

Anastas Michos

San Francisco:

David Novell

Paris:

Steve Switaj

Visual Effects

Supervisor:

Rob Legato

Producer:

Peter Takeuchi

Co-ordinator:

Cari Thomas

Editors:

Tom Bryant

Rob Wait

Digital Compositing

Supervisor:

Price Pethal

Artists:

Michael Kanfer

Adam Stark

Dennis Blakey

Kenneth Brain

Candice Chinn

Raj Naiksatam

Judith Crow

Gary Jackemuk

Laura DiBiagio

Floyd Casey

Mark Lasoff

Randal Rosa

Peter Farson

Feliciano di Giorgio

Digital Painters:

Craig Mullens

Kevin Mack

Digital Production

Manager:

Barbara McCullough

Digital Operations

Manager:

Mark Lohff

Digital Co-ordinator:

Kristen Niederholzer

Computer Graphics

Supervisor:

Jim Hillin

Editors

Mick Audsley

Joke van Wijk

Production Designer

Dante Ferretti

Supervising Art Director

Malcolm Middleton

Art Directors

New Orleans:

Alan Tomkins

San Francisco:

Jim Tocci

Paris:

Jean-Michel Hugon

Set Design

New Orleans:

Stella Furner

Munroe Kelly

Set Decorator

Francesca Lo Schiavo

Scenic Artist

New Orleans:

Dale Haugo

Storyboard Artist

Martin Asbury

Special Effects Supervisor

Yves de Bono

Special Effects

Floor Supervisor

Chris Corbould

Special Effects Workshop

Supervisor

Trevor Neighbour

Special Effects

New Orleans:

Dale Martin

Joe Quinlivan

Matt Kutcher

Andy Sebok

Costume Design

Sandy Powell

Costume Supervisor

John Scott

New Orleans:

Deirdre Williams

Make-up Supervisor

and Lestat Make-up

Michele Burke

Make-up

Carol Schwartz

Nick Dudman

Sarah Monzani

Morag Ross

Vampire Make-up

Stan Winston

Design and

Co-ordination:

John Rosengrant

Shane Mahan

Art Department:

Ken Brilliant

Lindsay McGowan

Mike Harper

Vampire Effects

Mechanical Design:

Richard Landon

Alfred Sousa

Lestat Transformation

Robotic Design:

Tim Mordella

Alan Scott

Rich Haugen

Technical Co-ordinator:

Craig Barr

Production

Co-ordinator:

Tara Meaney-Crocitto

Contact Lens

Technician:

Johanna Pizzo

Vampire Nails:

Julie Wood

Hairstylists

Jan Archibald

Eithne Fennell

Michael White

New Orleans:

Tammy Kusian

Principal Wigs and

Hair Designer:

Renata Leuschner

Titles

FrameLine

Opticals

Studio 51

Music

Elliot Goldenthal

Music Conductor

Jonathan Sheffer

Orchestrations

Robert Elhai

Elliot Goldenthal

Music Producer

Matthias Gohl

Electronic Music

Producer:

Richard Martinez

Source Music

Consultant:

Eliza Thompson

Supervisor:

George Fenton

Music Editor

Michael Connell

Songs/Music Extracts

"Sympathy for the

Devil" by Mick Jagger,

Keith Richards,

performed by Guns N'

Roses; "Tersichore

and Harp Concerto

in B Flat" by George

Frederick Handel,

performed by The

King's Consort; "Sonata

in F Sharp" by Antonio

Soler, performed by

Joanna Leach; "Sonata

in E Flat Adagio e

Cantabile" by Joseph

Haydn, performed by

Joanna Leach

Vampire Theatre

Choreography

Micha Bergese

Supervising Sound Editor

Eddy Joseph

Sound Editor

Peter Joly

Digital Sound Editor

Nigel Mills

Foley Editor

Peter Holt

Sound Mixers

Clive Winter

Music:

Stephen McLaughlin

Joel Iwataki

Re-recording Mixers

Tom Fleishman

Robin O'Donoghue

Dean Humphreys

Stunt Co-ordinator

Greg Powell

Animal Trainer

Paul Calabria

Livestock Wrangler

John Chaney

Film Extracts

Don Juan (1926)

Sunrise - A Song of Two

Humans (1927)

Gone with the Wind

(1939)

Cast

Brad Pitt

Louis



Kissing with confidence: Imelda Staunton, Tom Cruise

Interview is perhaps as strong as it could be, given concealed but inherent weaknesses in the original material. Sometimes, as it trips through two centuries, the film overdoses on montage: decades are encapsulated with a flurry of impressions that can never convey the changelessness that so frustrates Claudia. However, the kitsch-sounding summation of the twentieth century in terms of movie sunrises (*Sunrise*, *Nosferatu et al*) is surprisingly effective, even to the throwaway punch line that has Louis re-encountering Lestat after wasting an evening on *Tequila Sunrise*. Exposed by the adaptation are some astonishingly ramshackle plot transitions, papered over by clever banter in the novel, but shown up for arrant melodrama here. By the time Louis has ended a *third* episode by burning down the set, the device becomes tiresome.

Fortunately, Jordan's work here is more in keeping with the fantastical *The Company of Wolves* than the *echt-Hollywood* of *High Spirits*. Never allowing make-up effects to swamp character as he did in his werewolf outing, Jordan achieves tiny moments of inexplicable creepiness (the stone eyes of the tomb-image of Louis' dead wife closing as he dies) and genuinely shocking scenes of physical horror (Lestat's blood pouring from his throat in a tide that threatens Claudia's delicate pumps). While the first half sometimes seems cramped for an historical epic, the trip to Paris allows for marvellous full-blooded decadences such as the vampire theatre with its Jean Rollin-like ritual cruelties. Sadly, the last-minute reversal, as Lestat pops up magically in Molloy's car without any narrative justification, reduces the grand vision to just another horror movie.

Though Louis is given an unusual interior life, and Lestat and Claudia remain among the most striking vampire characters in fiction, everyone else who passes through the overpopulated story is stuck with being a one-scene victim or a plot contrivance. Stephen Rea's Santiago, who has a neat Chaplinesque introduction as he teases Louis on a Paris street, suffers especially from an ill-thought-out subplot. He first declares it unforgivable for one vampire to murder another. Then he kills Claudia merely on suspicion, inci-

dentally destroying Madeleine and thus violating his own rule. Antonio Banderas' gloomy Armand suffers from playing stooge to tiresome stretches of religious debate, then allows his life work to be wrecked for no real reason and steps out of the story, presumably to sulk for a few more centuries.

The subtitle, which Rice has retroactively stuck on new editions of her book, indicates an ambition to chronicle all of vampire-kind, but the strength of the film is the uneasy, eroticised, disturbing relationship between Louis and Lestat. The elder vampire tries to nudge his prissier pupil into indulging a capacity for sin, and their shared crime – the creation of Claudia – is the event which ends the stasis of their lives, consigning Lestat to the past and pushing Louis out into the world in search of answers.

While the import of *Interview* is in Louis' quizzing of human and inhuman nature, the novel's lasting appeal lies with Lestat and Claudia, and Jordan's film is less likely to be remembered for its philosophy than for its action. Pitt's pouting Louis signals modernity by confessing his confused alienation, which Armand marks as the characteristic of the age, but the devils get all the best tunes. Remarkably, 12 year-old Kirsten Dunst plays Claudia as an embittered woman in a pre-teenage body, a uniquely childish monster who kills her dressmaker or piano teacher on a whim and then nuzzles up to her 'parents' for approval.

In subsequent much inferior novels, Rice has recanted her depiction in *Interview* of Lestat as a dashing monster, infusing him with Louis' conscience and introspection, but the character works best as a villain. Using an effeminate version of his *Far and Away* accent, Cruise is a fine narcissist monster. Demonstrating a wit rarely seen in his earlier work, he justifies his atrocities ("God kills indiscriminately and so shall we") and complains after the Louisiana purchase that he dislikes the taste of democratic American blood. By contrast with Pitt, and following Gary Oldman's lovelorn Dracula, it is refreshing to find a screen vampire who truly relishes being a monster.

Kim Newman

Leon

France 1994

Director: Luc Besson

Certificate

18

Distributor

Buena Vista

Production Companies

Gaumont

Les Films du Dauphin

Executive Producer

Claude Besson

Producer

Luc Besson

Line Producer

Bernard Grenet

New York:

Jean Garland

Production Manager

(France)

Thierry Guilmaud

Assistant Director

France:

Pascal Chaumeil

New York:

Eric McGinty

Casting

New York:

Todd Thaler

France:

Nathalie Cheron

Screenplay

Luc Besson

Script Supervisor

Sylvette Baudrot

Director of Photography

Thierry Arbogast

Editor

Sylvie Landra

Production Designer

Dan Weil

Art Director

Carol Nast

Set Decorator

Françoise Benoît-Fresco

Art Decorator

Gérard Drolon

Special Effects

New York:

Al Griswold

France:

Nicky Alder

Costume Design

Magali Guidasci

Make-up

Geneviève Peyralade

Music

Eric Serra

Music Director

Jean Altman

Music Executive Producer

Claude Sera

Music Co-ordinator

Pierre Henriot

Songs/Music Extracts

"Shape of my Heart"

by Sting, Dominic

Miller, performed by

Sting; "Venus as a Boy"

by and performed by

Björk Gudmundsdottir

Sound Editor

Patrice Gisolet

Sound Mixers

France:

Pierre Excoffier

Gérard Lamps

François Groult

Bruno Tarrière

Music Mixer

William Flageollet

Sound Effects

Jean Morris

Foley Artist

Jérôme Lévy

Cast

Jean Reno

Leon

Gary Oldman

Stansfield

Nathalie Portman

Mathilda

Benny Aello

Tony

Peter Appel

Maliky

Michael Badalucco

Mathilda's Father

Ellen Greene

Mathilda's Mother

Elizabeth Regan

Mathilda's Sister

Carl J. Matusevich

Mathilda's Brother

Randolph Scott

Keith A. Glascoe

Stansfield Men

Frank Senger

Fatman

Lucius Wyatt "Cherokee"

Tonto

Luc Bernard

Mickey

Jessie Keosian

Old Lady

Abdul Hassan Sharif

Mathilda's Taxi Driver

Stuart Rudin

Leon's Taxi Driver

George Martin

Receptionist

9,920 feet

110 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Technicolor

Anamorphic

US Title:

The Professional

● In New York, Leon, a hitman, is given the job of scaring off a new gang leader. He executes his task, silently disposing of numerous side-kicks. Back at his dingy Little Italy apartment, Leon, meets a neighbour's 12-year-old daughter, Mathilda, on the stairs. Her father is being visited by Stansfield, a crooked police agent about some adulterated cocaine. The next morning, while Mathilda is at the shops, Stansfield and his men return and murder her father, stepmother, sister and little brother. They are still there when she comes back, so she walks straight up to Leon's apartment, begging him to let her in. He finally gives in, saying she can stay one night.

Discovering his profession, she persuades him to train her as a killer so she can avenge her brother's death. Leon collects some of his earnings from his mentor Tony, and he and

Mathilda check into a hotel as father and daughter. But when Mathilda decides that she is falling in love with Leon she tells the hotel proprietor they are lovers, and they are thrown out.

Mathilda goes back to her family's apartment and finds a wad of cash her father has hidden. She hides as Stansfield enters and overhears his office address. She gets into the Department of Justice, and follows him into the men's room, but he traps her. Just as he is about to kill her, he is disturbed by a colleague, so holds her prisoner in his office instead. Leon, back from a job that involves killing one of Stansfield's bent cops, finds a note Mathilda has left and comes to her rescue. Stansfield, furious, demands that Tony tell him where Leon is. Leon's hotel is stormed by armed police but he fights them off. The couple manage to escape separately. Badly wounded, Leon walks out of the front entrance where Stansfield shoots him. As he dies he hands Stansfield the pin from a grenade, which then explodes. Mathilda returns to school and explains her story.

● Call him old-fashioned but Luc Besson seems to be devoted to the resolutely romantic action movie, as well as to a rather fixed narrative. After Christophe Lambert, Jean-Marc Barr and Anne Parillaud, Jean Reno takes on the mantle of the sullen, lonely but highly skilled anti-hero. Leon is also a sly tribute to Reno's role in *Nikita* as Victor the "cleaner", the man called in to mop up when an assassination goes wrong. As such it starts with an interesting enough premise: what does a hitman do when he goes home? So we see Leon, straight after a brilliant, emotionless display of professional violence, buy milk from his local store and engage in a po-faced spot of ironing and dusting.

But as soon as we watch him at home, it becomes obvious that this hitman has a weak spot – and is, therefore, about to meet his downfall. Although he sleeps sitting up, and with one eye open, cradling a pistol, he loves his houseplant. It does not take long for that needy, pretty little plant to take on a symbolic association with a needy, pretty little girl. Besson's self-referentiality is extended further through Mathilda herself – a kind of mini-Nikita with her dark bob, sultry sulkiness and sure aim with a gun. The difference is that Mathilda is only 12. It cannot be a complete coincidence that putting the names Leon and Nikita together almost gives us *Lolita*, for one theme of that novel is echoed strongly here. Mathilda effortlessly and manipulatively turns the surrogate father and daughter into a chaste pair of lovers, first with her admission of love for Leon, and then with her sly "confession" to the hotel proprietor. And naïf Leon takes her seriously. So socially removed is he from the world that he accepts the transition without question, while his physical attitude towards her remains almost devoutly pure. It is the camera's eye, not his, ►

◀ that lingers on Mathilda's pre-teen, skimpily clad body. Despite his considerable skills, Leon, according to the film, is emotionally too immature himself to know exactly what is going on.

The reason for this is that Leon is a figure seen through a child's eyes: those of Mathilda. It is her almost-adolescent wish-fulfilment that has created this strange deviant of the classic strong, silent male: part post-punk anti-hero, complete with unfathomable glasses and stubble; part classic hitman – he even has a violin case with a machine-gun inside it – and part quaint gentleman. Leon will not kill women or children.

This child's eye view paints the other characters in broad sweeps too: Gary Oldman's Stansfield is pure, crazy, corrupt cop, with extravagant mannerisms that range from an overwrought method of popping pills to an obsession with Beethoven and an ability to sniff the truth on people (a characterisation drawn from villains in comic books). Mathilda's father is a caricature of abusive vulgarity, with his stereotypically fat unkemptness and proclivity for slapping her whenever she gets in the way, while her step-mother is a walking Barbie doll, and her sister an aerobicised teenage nightmare.

Leon turns the stuff of conventional story books into a virtual reality fairytale for streetwise, techno-age children. In it are offbeat, modern versions of goodies and baddies, plenty of violence and even romance. Here, an ordinary hotel room can be transformed, in moments, into a blackened, gutted battlefield, swarming with armed police, still no match for superhero Leon, whose initial silent foray into a well-guarded hotel suite takes on the same intensity as getting through the levels of a computer game.

Mathilda's particular technological fantasy allows her to lose her nasty family, to learn to be a hitwoman, and to fall in love with her hero. When it is over, she shuts the book and goes back to school. She accepts Leon's death with as much worldly wisdom as she accepted that he was a killer. It is, she knows, a tough world. For these cynical and sophisticated children, movies have to better the crude computer-generated images of their toys, and Besson's visual style is a perfect amalgam of traditional and modern: looming, cartoon-style close-ups of faces; breath-taking frozen images such as a body hanging in a corridor, or a vertiginous view from the top of the stairs and big, immaculately orchestrated action sequences.

Besson likes to throw a rebellious woman into the works of his films. He obliges here by giving us a girl's eye view that goes defiantly against gender stereotype (though not without some leering on his part). But to look for further meaning in *Leon* will get the viewer nowhere. Like all his other films, it is, intellectually, gorgeously insubstantial. Meanwhile, the kids who would love it are officially barred by its 18 certificate.

Amanda Lipman

Only You

USA 1994

Director: Norman Jewison

Certificate

PG

Distributor

Columbia TriStar

Production Company

Fried/Woods

Films/Yorktown

Productions

Producers

Norman Jewison

Cary Woods

Robert N. Fried

Charles Mulvehill

Associate Producer

Michael Jewison

Production Supervisors

Laura Fattori

Italy:

Roberto Malerba

Production Co-ordinator

Cecilia Alvarenga

Unit Production Manager

Stephen Lim

Location Managers

Fabio Massimo Dell'Ora

Rosanna Roditi

Mario Francini

Location Co-ordinator

Annie Loeffler

Assistant Directors

Tony Brandt

Tom Snyder

Marco Pettini

Francesca Fuschini

Glen Trotiner

Dean Garvin

Casting

Howard Feuer

Italy:

Shaila Rubin

Rita Forzano

Pittsburgh:

Canice Kennedy

Screenplay

Diane Drake

Script Supervisor

Rachel Griffiths

Director of Photography

Sven Nykvist

Camera Operator

Kevin Jewison

Steadicam Operators

Nicola Pecorini

Pittsburgh:

Tass Michos

Editor

Stephen Rivkin

Production Designer

Luciana Arrighi

Art Directors

Stephano Ortolani

Maria Teresa Barbasso

Pittsburgh:

Gary Kosko

Set Decorators

Ian Whittaker

Italy:

Alessandra Querzola

Pittsburgh:

Diana Stoughton

Set Dresser

Catherine Stanton

Special Effects Supervisor

Dennis Dion

Costume Design

Milena Canonero

Costume Supervisors

Nicoletta Ercole

Pittsburgh:

Marilyn Matthews

Make-up Artists

Fabrizio Sforza

Joanne Gair

Hairstylists

Aldo Signoretti

Ferdinando Merolla

Titles/Opticals

Film Effects

Music

Rachel Portman

Music Editor

Bill Abbott

Songs/Music Extracts

"Once in a Lifetime"

by Michael Bolton,

Diane Warren, Walter

Afanasieff, performed

by Michael Bolton;

"Only You (And You Alone)" by Buck Ram, Ande Ram, performed by Louis Armstrong; "Some Enchanted Evening" by Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein II, performed by 1) Ezio Pinza, Mary Martin, 2) Ezio Pinza; "Amore Contro", "Senza Perderci di Vista" by Eros Ramazzotti, Adelio Cogliati, Piero Cassano, performed by Eros Ramazzotti; "Swing City", "Sloe Gin Fizz" by Richard Iacona; "Livin' in the Streets" by Kirk Whalum, Ricky Lawson, performed by Kirk Whalum; "Libiamo ne'lieti calici" from "La Traviata" by Giuseppe Verdi, performed by Agnes Baltsa, Jose Carreras, London Symphony Orchestra, Tallis Chamber Choir, Plácido Domingo; Overture from "La Forza del destino" by Giuseppe Verdi; "O sole mio" by Edoardo di Capua, Giovanni Capurro, Alfredo Mazzucchi, "Rondo" performed by Quartetto Gelato; "Hallelujah Chorus" by George Frideric Handel, performed by The Toronto Symphony Orchestra, The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir; "On the Beautiful Blue Danube" by Johann Strauss

Supervising Sound Editors
Michael O'Farrell
Wayne Griffin
Sound Editors
Tony Currie
David Evans
John Laing
Bruce Lange
Production Sound Mixer
Ken Weston
Music Mixer
Dick Lewzey
ADR Mixers
Tom O'Connell
David Boulton
Sound Re-recording Mixers
Don White
Lou Solakofski
Dino Pigat
Foley Artist
Andy Malcolm
Group ADR
David Kramer
Burton Sharp

Cast
Marisa Tomei
Faith Corvatch
Robert Downey Jr
Peter Wright
Bonnie Hunt
Kate
Joaquim de Almeida
Giovanni
Fisher Stevens
Larry
Billy Zane
False Damon Bradley
Adam Lefevre
Damon Bradley
John Benjamin Hickey
Dwayne
Siobhan Fallon
Leslie
Antonia Ray
Fortune Teller

Phyllis Newman
Faith's Mother
Denise Du Maurier
Dwayne's Mother
Tammy Minoff
Young Faith
Harry Barandes
Young Larry
Jessica Hertel
Young Kate
Rick Applegate
Marc Field
TWA Gate Attendants
Bob Tracey
Foot Patient
Gianfranco Barra
Danieli Concierge
Barbara Cupisti
Anna
Sergio Pierattini
Pension Waiter
Giovanni di Benedetto
Pension Concierge
Domenico Pane
Le Sirenuse Concierge
Florence Fiorentini
Old Man
Francesco Romei
Flower Vendor
Buck Herron
Man with Medallion
Amanda Lohman
Girl at Pool
Shari Summers
Woman with Suede Boots
Christina Formichi Moglia
Information Desk Attendant

Mattia Sbragia
Alitalia Pilot
Fausto Lombardi
Sonia Martinelli
Simona Ferraro Chartoff
Renato Scarpa
Salvatore Lorgia
Alitalia Gate Attendants
Diane Jones
Alitalia Flight Attendant
James Sampson
Saxophone Player
Claudio Padovan
Boat Driver
K.J. Roberts
Airport Security Guard
Gregory Gibson Kenny
State Police Officer
Antone di Leo
Taxi Driver
Jaclyn Urso
Jessica Merlin
Bethany Smocer
Girls at Carnival
Gina Maria Trello
Girl in Classroom
Victor Buhler
Waiter at Party
Dina Morrone
Shoe Show Announcer

9,749 feet
108 minutes

Original Running Time
Dolby stereo
In colour
Technicolor

● Pittsburgh. Eleven year-old Faith Corvatch and her brother Larry consult her ouija board about the identity of her future soul mate. The name Damon Bradley is spelled out. Three years later, at a fair, a fortune-teller comes up with an identical name.

At twenty-eight Faith is engaged to Dwayne, a podiatrist. A few days before the wedding she receives a phone call from one of her fiancé's school friends. The caller's name is Damon Bradley. Having ascertained that he is about to board a flight to Venice, Faith rushes to the airport for a sighting of the man she feels is destined for her. She is too late but decides to follow on the next plane. Her best friend and sister-in-law Kate, on the hop from her own marriage problems, accompanies her.

Once in Italy, Faith and Kate trace Damon to an exclusive Venetian hotel only to find him gone. They hire a car and make for Rome. Their only lead, a

woman who works in a boutique, tells them where they can catch up with Damon that evening. Meanwhile Kate embarks on a flirtation with the boutique's proprietor, Giovanni. At the designated restaurant they glimpse Damon but he leaves before Faith can approach him. Tantalized, she runs after him, losing her shoe in the process. The shoe is retrieved by Peter Wright, a footwear salesman from Boston. Gleaning the requisite information, he passes himself off to Faith as Damon Bradley. The pair spend the night walking the streets of Rome in a romantic haze. They discover they have much in common; in other words, they are in love. When, however, Peter reveals his true identity, Faith is furious and spurns him.

Eventually Peter manages to persuade her that he will help pick up the real Damon's trail. Driving south to Positano with Giovanni and Kate, they track him down. Although Damon turns out to be impossibly handsome, Faith's date with him turns sour when he starts groping her; he is definitely not her type. Peter, ever watchful, intervenes and in the fight which ensues, the truth is revealed: this Damon is also an impostor hired by Peter to disillusion Faith. Irate, she breaks off her engagement and departs for home, just as Larry, in conciliatory mood, arrives in pursuit of Kate. Larry tells Kate that he set Faith up with the ouija board and the fortune-teller as a boyish prank.

At the airport Faith and Peter, in queues for separate flights, hear Damon Bradley's name being paged. Simultaneously they rush for the information desk to discover the real Damon, a middle-aged businessman. Peter explains the situation and departs; Faith realises she loves him and gives chase. Though Peter's flight is closed, sympathetic airline staff allow Faith on board and the pair embrace to the applause of passengers and crew.

● It seems appropriate, if more than a little pitiable, that contemporary romantic comedies should rely



Still moonstruck: Marisa Tomei, Robert Downey Jr

so heavily on dissertations on the meaning of love. Could this film do for Rilke's 'You Who Never Arrived' what *Four Weddings and a Funeral* has done for W.H. Auden in the poetry sales stakes? More arch even than that confection, *Only You's* central thesis is the meeting of minds. Its heroine, Faith, teaches English at high school, which allows for a generous peppering of literary references. Her first scene as an adult finds her expounding impassionedly on the ideals of platonic love. Even the names are charged with corny significance: Faith, trusting in destiny, searches for her swain, Damon, only to find her Mr Wright under her nose.

It is cinema, however, specifically that group of romantic comedies made and set in the 50s featuring the American ingenue on vacation in Italy – anything from *Three Coins in the Fountain* to *Roman Holiday* – which provides the main body of allusions. Indeed Faith and Peter's compatibility appears to hinge on the ease with which they're able to reenact the scene in *Roman Holiday* where Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn put their hands in the statue's mouth. The period feel lingers over the film, from the wedding gown foisted on Faith by her prospective mother-in-law, which she is conveniently modelling when the fateful phone call arrives and is subsequently too preoccupied to remove, to the interminable sight-seeing tours of fountains. Marisa Tomei as Faith has a kind of breathless elfin quality intended to mimic the ethereality of Hepburn, while even Giovanni's patter is reminiscent of Rossano Brazzi in *Summer Madness*.

It's as if romantic love is perceived to be a much-craved but easily denied commodity for contemporary audiences. Because it is seen to be untenable it has to be delivered second-hand, self-consciously, as a parody of itself. Hence the lush location shots, the glistening moonlit streets resembling the set of some classic musical, the gushiest opera arias alongside schmaltz such as "Some Enchanted Evening" and "O Sole Mio" plus outrageous dialogue like, "I was born to kiss you". The film's saving grace, perhaps, resides in the more cynical characters, Peter and Kate, who wise-crack their way through the gunge.

At best *Only You* has something in common with Jewison's earlier and thoroughly enjoyable *Moonstruck*, where the intensity of the passion between Cher and Nicholas Cage managed to be both touching and ridiculous, a happy coincidence of the overblown and the mundane. Here, the effect is diluted because the site for romance is firmly fixed some place else, at some other time. The happy ending is delivered by benevolent Alitalia staff incanting the word *amore*; it deals in nostalgia and escapism, but not in emotions. For a light-hearted conceit about the tribulations of mistaken identity, *Only You* dabbles too deeply and a shade too moralistically on the nature of true love.

Jo Comino

The Pagemaster

USA 1994

Director: Maurice Hunt/Joe Johnston

Certificate

U

Distributor

20th Century Fox

Production Company

20th Century Fox

In association with

Turner Pictures

Producers

David Kirschner

Paul Gertz

Live-action:

Michael R. Joyce

Animation Co-producers

David J. Steinberg

Barry Weiss

Associate Producers

Claire Glidden

Roxy Novotny Steven

Production Supervisor

Melissa Kurtz

Supervising Production

Co-ordinator

Bill Bloom

Production Co-ordinators

Jon Terada

Liz Wartenberg

Unit Production Manager

Marie Cantin

Location Manager

Barry Gremillion

Assistant Directors

Betsy Magruder

Barbara Ravis

Hilbert Hakim

Animation:

Michael Paxton

Casting

Amy Kimmelman

Additional Voices:

Gordon Hunt

Kris Zimmerman

Screenplay

David Casci

David Kirschner

Ernie Contreras

Story

David Kirschner

David Casci

Script Supervisor

Brenda K. Wachel

Live-action Director of Photography

Alexander Gruszynski

Visual Effects Photography

Dennis Skotak

Optical Effects Photography

Bob Hill

Animation Camera

Supervisors

James Keefe

Steve Mills

Animation Reference Camera

Phillip Meador

Camera Operators

Animation:

Robert Jacobs

Dan Larsen

Robert Maine

Neil Viker

Visual Effects:

James Belkin

Chris Duddy

Visual Effects Supervisors

Richard T. Sullivan

4 Ward Productions:

Robert Skotak

Visual Effects

4 Ward Productions

Robert Skotak

Elaine Edford

Visual Effects

Department

Co-ordinator:

Tiffany L. Kurtz

Producer:

Jenny Fulle

Editor:

Amy L.C. Pawlowski

Opticals

Perpetual Motion

Pictures

Fantasy 2

Supervising Animator

Bruce Smith

Animation Sequence Director

Glenn Chaika

Animation Supervisors

Story:

Robert Lence

Layout:

Don Morgan

Background:

Jim Hickey

Special Effects:

Mark Myer

Animation Check:

Gina Bradley

Colour Key:

Clayton Stang

Ink & Paint:

Laura Craig

Bonnie Blough

Deborah Rykoff Bennett

Final Check:

Pat Sito

Character Animators

Anne Marie Bardwell

Ralph Fernan

Kevin Johnson

Dave Kupczyk

Jason Lethcoe

Mike Nguyen

Matt O'Callaghan

Bob Scott

Special Effects Animation

Supervising Animators:

John Allan Armstrong

Kathleen Quaipe-Hodge

Animators:

Margaret Craig-Chang

Al Holter

Jeffrey Howard

Brice Mallier

Peter Matheson

Brian McSweeney

Allen Stovall

Breakdown Artists:

Chris Kirschbaum

Mary Mullen

Nate Pacheco

Lou Romano

Department Co-ordinators

Special Effects:

Shelly Amoroso

Animation Check:

Zac Moncrief

Layout/Background:

Charles DesRochers

Ink & Paint:

William Leavitt

Final Check:

Sean Dempsey

Mike Pettengill

Layout Artists

Rough:

Arlan Jewell

Dan Mills

Simon Varela

David Womersley

Clean-up:

Gay Lawrence

Valerio Ventura

Background Artists

Bill Dely

Jonathan Goley

Jim Hickey

Mi Kyung Joung-Raynis

Jane Nussbaum

George Taylor

Workbook Artists

Tony Christov

Tom Ellery Jnr

Glenn Vilppu

Character Breakdown Artists

Wanda L. Brown

Todd Frederiksen

Opticals

Perpetual Motion

Pictures

Fantasy 2

Supervising Animator

Bruce Smith

Animation Sequence Director

Glenn Chaika

Animation Supervisors

Story:

Robert Lence

Layout:

Don Morgan

Background:

Jim Hickey

Special Effects:

Mark Myer

Animation Check:

Gina Bradley

Colour Key:

Clayton Stang

Ink & Paint:

Laura Craig

Bonnie Blough

Deborah Rykoff Bennett

Final Check:

Pat Sito

Character Animators

Anne Marie Bardwell

Ralph Fernan

Kevin Johnson

Dave Kupczyk

Jason Lethcoe

Mike Nguyen

Matt O'Callaghan

Bob Scott

Special Effects Animation

Supervising Animators:

John Allan Armstrong

Kathleen Quaipe-Hodge

Animators:

Margaret Craig-Chang

Al Holter

Jeffrey Howard

Brice Mallier

Peter Matheson

Brian McSweeney

Allen Stovall

Breakdown Artists:

Chris Kirschbaum

Mary Mullen

Nate Pacheco

Lou Romano

Department Co-ordinators

Special Effects:

Shelly Amoroso

Animation Check:

Zac Moncrief

Layout/Background:

Charles DesRochers

Ink & Paint:

William Leavitt

Final Check:

Sean Dempsey

Mike Pettengill

Layout Artists

Rough:

Arlan Jewell

Dan Mills

Simon Varela

David Womersley

Clean-up:

Gay Lawrence

Valerio Ventura

Background Artists

Bill Dely

Jonathan Goley

Jim Hickey

Mi Kyung Joung-Raynis

Jane Nussbaum

George Taylor

Workbook Artists

Tony Christov

Tom Ellery Jnr

Glenn Vilppu

Character Breakdown Artists

Wanda L. Brown

Todd Frederiksen

Dean Wellins

The Hollywood Cartoon

Company

Unit Production

Executive:

G. Sue Shakespeare

Unit Executive

Supervising Animator:

Skip Jones

Studio General

Manager:

Ricky Solotoff

Animators:

Matthew Bates

Jon Hooper

◀ dio has reverted to using third division subjects like *Thumbelina*, while Disney are tentatively experimenting with original material (*The Lion King*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*), albeit conventionally structured. 20th Century Fox's latest animated feature, *The Pagemaster*, can only be described as a meta-fiction. Set in a library with a librarian named after Melvil Dewey, the father of decimal classification, it brims with allusions to numerous classics of children's fiction. Three of its major characters are genres in the form of living books. Its message, drummed in none too subtly, extols the empowering pleasures of reading.

Other cinematic influences are detectable but not overpoweringly pungent: a bit of *The Neverending Story*; a dash of *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*; an animation/live action combined structure which recalls Chuck Jones' *The Phantom Tollbooth* (the transition is beautifully executed, but over much too quickly). Yet in *The Pagemaster's* league table of recommended art forms, the literary consistently outranks the filmic, a strangely self-effacing gesture given that this is a film. The Pagemaster even insists that Richard has been turned into "an illustration", rather than a mere "cartoon". Clearly the film-makers are eager to avert parental criticism, overtly signposting the intention to supplement rather than supplant reading. One wonders how many parents will be aware that screenwriter/producer David Kirschner, who wrote and co-produced *An American Tail*, was also responsible for the original *Child's Play*, the alleged corrupter of Jamie Bulger's juvenile killers (who probably never saw it), and if one believes the tabloids, the most evil film ever made.

The Pagemaster, however, is a very worthy film, in line with 20th Century Fox's earnest and eco-friendly *FernGully*: *The Last Rainforest* and *Once upon a Forest*. Like the latter, it is well-crafted, unlikely to corrupt or deprave, and faintly dull. The live action sequences book-ending the animation perfunctorily establish and conclude. Macaulay Culkin, bespectacled and restrained, has not broadened his range of facial expressions, and is still reminiscent of Harold Lloyd with a hormone problem, although not as talented. As a cartoon, he's rather more likable, speaking his lines well despite the fact that his voice broke during the three years it took to make the film.

Christopher Lloyd does his stock rent-a-loony schtick as Mr Dewey/The Pagemaster and the rest of the cast of voice actors includes a hammy Patrick Stewart, the ubiquitous Whoopi Goldberg, Leonard Nimoy, and Frank Welker – the last a Mel Blanc *de nos jours*. The animation, directed by Maurice Hunt, is pretty and suitably bookish and the whole moves along swiftly enough. My date for the press screening, seven-year-old Jay, appeared to like it, although he seemed more interested in playing with his *Lion King* toy from MacDonalds.

Leslie Felperin

The Road to Wellville

USA1994

Director: Alan Parker

Certificate
18

Distributor
Entertainment
Production Company
Beacon presents
A Dirty Hands
production
Executive Producers
Tom Rosenberg
Marc Abraham
Producers
Alan Parker
Arman Bernstein
Robert F. Colesberry
Associate Producer
Lisa Moran
Production Co-ordinator
Ingrid Johanson
Unit Production Managers
James Bigwood
Chris Coles
Location Manager
Liz Matthews
Location Co-ordinator
Gina Fortunato
Assistant Directors
Peter Kohn
Molly M. Mayeux
Trey Batchelor
Casting
Howard Feuer
Juliet Taylor
ADR Voice:
Barbara Harris
Location:
Judy Bouley
Screenplay
Alan Parker
Based on the novel by
T. Coraghessan Boyle
Script Supervisor
Dianne Dreyer
Director of Photography
Peter Biziou
Camera Operator
Michael Roberts
Editor
Gerry Hambling
Production Designer
Brian Morris
Art Directors
John Willett
UK:
Richard Earl
Set Decorator
Claudette Didul
Set Dressers
John Cenicerio
John Brommel
Michael Shapiro
Larry Sauls
Bill Alford
Steve Peterman
Beth Christian
Hal Gardner
Larry Brew
Rick Gardner
Jennifer Debell
Robert Schleinig
Food Design
Dennis A. Nowe
Draftsmen
Scott Murphy
London:
Peter Childs
Scenics
Bruce Stultz
James Onate
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Alan E. Lorimer
Special Effects Foreman
Dave Simmons
Costume Design
Penny Rose
Wardrobe Supervisor
John Hay
Make-up Supervisor
Peter Frampton
Chief Hairstylist
Martin Samuel
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Music
Rachel Portman

Music Conductor
David Snell
Orchestrations
Rachel Portman
Songs/Music Extracts
"Laughing Song"
by Rachel Portman;
"Where the Spirits
Roar" by Jake Parker,
Alan Parker; "A
Chewing Song" by
Joe Hayden, Theo A.
Metz; "God Rest Ye
Merry Gentlemen"
performed by The San
Brass Quartet; "Waltz
of the Flowers" by
Pyotr Tchaikovsky,
"All'ungherese"
by Franz Schubert,
"Canzonetta" by Felix
Mendelssohn, "O Come
All Ye Faithful", "Silent
Night" performed by
The San String
Orchestra; "Rigoletto"
by Giuseppe Verdi,
performed by JoAnne
McNamara-Regan,
Constantin Belyayev;
"The San Waltz" by
Rachel Portman,
performed by The San
Waltz Quartet; "Casta
Diva" (from "Norma")
by Vincenzo Bellini,
performed by Sara
Simas, Mary Jane Corry;
"Christmas Oratorio
(Opus 12)" by Camille
Saint-Saëns, performed
by The Mid-Hudson
Camera Choir;
"Mississippi Rag" by
W.H. Krell, "Neapolitan
Dance" by Peter
Tchaikovsky,
performed by The San
Garden Brass Ensemble
Supervising Sound Editors
Alan Robert Murray
Terry Rodman
Sound Editors
Donald J. Malouf
Walter Newman
Jayme S. Parker
Albert Gasser
Dialogue:
Lucy Coldsnow-Smith
David Arnold
Stephanie Flack
Constance A. Kazmer
Supervising ADR Editor
Juno J. Ellis
ADR Editor
Denise Horta
Supervising Foley Editor
Scott D. Jackson
Foley Editors
Neil Burrow
Patrick Bietz
Leonard Gescke
Sound Mixers
Nelson Stoll
Music:
Dick Lewzey
ADR Mixer
Dean Drabin
Foley Mixers
Marilyn Graf
Mary Jo Lang
ADR Recordist
Ann Hadsell
Foley Recordists
Ron Grafton
Carolyn Tapp
Sound Re-recording Mixers
Andy Nelson
Scott Millan
Anna Behlmer
Sound Re-recorders
Andrea Lakin
Samuel F. Kaufman

Foley Artists
Kevin Bartnoff
Ellen Heuer
John Roesch
Hilda Hodges
Stunt Co-ordinators
Gary Combs
John Robotham

Cast
Anthony Hopkins
Dr John Harvey Kellogg
Bridget Fonda
Eleanor Lightbody
Matthew Broderick
Will Lightbody
John Cusack
Charles Ossining
Dana Carvey
George Kellogg
Michael Lerner
Goodloe Bender
Colm Meaney
Dr Lionel Badger
John Neville
Endymion Hart-Jones
Lara Flynn Boyle
Ida Muntz
Traci Lind
Nurse Irene Graves
Camryn Manheim
Virginia Cranehill
Roy Brocksmith
Poultney Dab
Norbert Weisser
Dr Spitzvogel
Monica Parker
Mrs Tindermarsh
Jacob Reynolds
Young George Kellogg
Michael Goodwin
Dr Frank Linniman
Marshall Efron
Bartholomew
Bookbinder
Alexander Slanknis
Mr Unpronounceable
Carole Shelley
Mrs Hookstratten
Gabriel Byrne
Desk Clerk
Robert Tracey
Ernest O'Reilly
Ann Tucker
Hannah
Jemima Ericson
Mrs Kellogg
Marianne Muellerleile
Nurse Bloethal

Jean Wenderlich
Ralph
Mark Jeffrey Miller
Woodbine
Joanne Pankow
Laughing Lady
Mary Jane Corry
Pianist
Richard Valliere
George Nannarelo
James Bigwood
Reporters
David Kraus
Laughing Instructor
D. Anthony Pender
Waiter on Train
Mary Lucy Divins
Woman on Train
William Hempel
Bellman
Richard H. Thornton
Mr Abernathy
Lisa Altomare
Mrs Portois
Jim Bath
Bartender
Madeline Shaw
Barbara Phillips
Waitresses
Lindsay Hutchinson Berte
Breathing Instructor
Denise S. Bass
Nurse
Charlotte H. Ballinger
'San' Guest
John Henry Scott
Bath Attendant
Richard K. Olsen
Fox Fur Man
Ann Deagon
Fox Fur Woman
Thomas Myers Jr
Process Server
Beth Bostic
Miss Jarvis
Kerry Maher
Doorman
Sam Garner
Farrington

10,800 feet
120 minutes
Dolby stereo
In colour
Duett
Prints by
Technicolor



Paved with good intentions: Broderick

Bath. Sex is banned in the 'San', but he manages to slip under Ida Muntz's sheets and to embrace Eleanor before she is chased away by Nurse Graves. Dr Lionel Badger, an 'expert on the clitoris' and no ally of Kellogg, arrives at the 'San', and his ideas begin to influence Eleanor. Meanwhile, George returns to throw boxes of excrement at the guests. We learn through a series of flashbacks that in childhood he constantly repulsed Kellogg's discipline through sheer obduracy.

Angered by a series of deaths (including that of Ida Muntz), Will visits the Red Onion Restaurant, where he drinks heavily and eats meat with Ossining, offering him \$1,000 to help him with his business. Back at the 'San', Will disgraces himself, vomiting over Kellogg, who promptly decides to operate to remove a 'kink' from Will's intestines. Meanwhile, at Per-Fo, they decide to steal others' cornflakes and re-box them.

Increasingly influenced by Badger's rhetoric of sexual freedom and animal rights, Emily snatches a woman's fox collar and casts it into the lake. Baring her breasts, she invites the woman's protesting husband to flay her as he might a fox. While Will enjoys the pleasures of a penis-stimulating Dusselberg Belt, Eleanor visits a Dr Spitzvogel who performs 'womb manipulation', masturbation by another name.

At Bender's hotel, Charles discovers that his partner has checked out, leaving him to pick up the bill. Unable to pay, he flees, only to land in more trouble. His visiting aunt has inadvertently riled Kellogg by telling him of George's partnership with Charles. Kellogg exposes Charles' defrauding of his aunt, and the police, still chasing the unpaid bill, catch up with him.

Boating with Nurse Graves, Will resists making love to her. But, back on land, he discovers Eleanor being 'treated' by Spitzvogel. Will beats him; Eleanor protests that he was only making her feel happy, something Will wouldn't know about. Will replies that he has never felt better. They agree to return home. George sets fire to the 'San' and, in the confusion, falls into a vat of nut butter. Kellogg saves George and embraces him. A coda reveals that Will and Eleanor lived happily; Charles made his fortune from a cola drink; and Kellogg died at 70, while performing a stunt to demonstrate his health.

● The film begins with a bout of laughter – forced laughter – the Sanitarium guests asked to guffaw repeatedly as part of a fitness regime. It's a novel strategy – open with an

● 1907. Battle Creek, Michigan. Dr John Harvey Kellogg's Sanitarium is dedicated to 'biological living' which proscribes meat, alcohol and sex. Eleanor Lightbody arrives with her husband Will who has, she fears, damaged his stomach through alcohol abuse and 'poisonous' food. While Kellogg is greeting them, his adopted adult son George starts kicking up a stir. He's come to the 'San', as usual, to demand money from his father. After a cursory examination, Will is thrust into a wheelchair and prescribed a rigorous round of enemas. Sexually frustrated, he fantasises about his allotted carer, Nurse Graves, and a fellow guest, Ida Muntz.

Charles Ossining, whom the Lightbodies met on the train to Battle Creek, joins the host of entrepreneurs in the burgeoning 'health food' business but finds that his partner, Goodloe Bender, has spent the start-up funds provided by Charles' aunt and has not secured a site for a factory. Later, Charles brightens when he meets George, making him a partner so that the projected product, Per-Fo, can carry the Kellogg name. The trio find a site, albeit an unhygienic one, and set about devising a recipe.

Will learns how to turn certain treatments to his advantage, enjoying the electric/sexual charge of the Sinusoidal

extended on-screen laugh, and hope the audience gets the idea. Add images of Kellogg spinning on one of his eccentric 'health machines' and the film offers not an introduction but an imperative: you will be amused.

Director Alan Parker's screenplay adapts T. Coraghessan Boyle's 1993 novel *The Road To Wellville*, a fictional recreation of Kellogg and his Sanitarium. At times Parker sticks very closely to the novel, lifting, for example, lines of dialogue from the text. However, he also makes major changes which tend to put a brighter spin on events. That's the least that can be said of Kellogg rescuing George from the vat. In the novel, Kellogg, in a feverish act of revenge, drowns George in the nut butter. So flagrant is this amendment that any send-up of syrupy Hollywood adaptations would have rejected it as over-the-top. Boyle's novel is hardly doom-laden. His prose revels in comic, grotesque characters, in the scabrous details of quackery. But there's a cutting edge of ambition, greed and mad conviction. After George's death, Kellogg the scientist dismisses his adopted son as an "experiment that hadn't worked". Parker's version allows for little but buffoonery.

Equipped with a set of false front teeth that his mouth can't contain, his face primed for disapproval, Anthony Hopkins gives Kellogg the look of a starved Bugs Bunny, and pitches his delivery somewhere between WC Fields and Billy Graham. It's a well conceived and executed turn, catching much of the spookiness that the script otherwise wants to forget. Battle Creek is a land of caricature, where the Lightbodies are dwarfed by outsize types such as Goodloe Bender (Michael Lerner reprising the bluster of his Jack Lipnick character from *Barton Fink*). As Ida Muntz, Lara Flynn Boyle wears a complexion so green she might have been dipped in pea juice. However, in terms of excess, Hopkins' real competition comes from the pseudo-scientific devices littering the 'San' - Parker's design team partly working from the real Kellogg's documents.

Watching a screen filled with all this detail is akin to viewing a painstakingly realised comic illustration let down by a duff caption. There is so much going on - actors continually-mugging, contraptions ceaselessly turning - that you feel beaten into submission. With *The Commitments*, Parker showed himself highly adept at directing comedy but this film sags because it persists in giving more of the same. Such unrelieved attention to sex and scatology is normally the preserve of the rag mag.

Any film adaptation of *The Road To Wellville* would face problems since much of the novel's vividness is carried in the narrative voice. The characters - more properly types - are supporting players. The film's visual clutter attempts to mirror Boyle's showy prose but completely misses his cool skewering of charlatans and fools. Instead, we get so many flabby capers.

Robert Yates

Rough Diamonds

Australia 1994

Director: Donald Crombie

Certificate

PG

Distributor

ITC

Production Companies

Forest Home
Films/Australian Film
Finance Corporation
In association with
Film Queensland
Beyond Films
Southern Star

Executive Producers

Damien Parer
Jonathan Shteinman

Producer

Damien Parer

Production Co-ordinator

Jennifer Cornwell

Production Manager

Julie Forster

Unit Manager

Dave Suttor

Location Manager

Christopher E. Strew

Post-production Supervisor

Wayne Hayes

2nd Unit Director

Brad Shields

Assistant Directors

Vicki Sugars
Adam Spencer
Angella McPherson

Casting

Susie Maizels
Maizels & Associates

Screenplay

Donald Crombie
Christopher Lee

Continuity

Carolina Haggstrom

Director of Photography

John Stokes

2nd Unit Director of Photography

Brad Shields

Camera Operator

Tracy Kubler

Opticals

Roger Cowland

Graphics

Wendy Buick

Editor

Wayne Le Clos

Production Designer

Georgina Greenhill

Art Director

Julianne White

Set Dresser

Rebecca Cohen

Costume Design

Kim Sandeman

Christine Feld

Make-up/Hairstylists

Margaret Archman

Carolyn Nott

Title Design

Extro

Titles/Opticals

Optical & Graphic

Music

Mark Moffatt

Wayne Goodwin

Music Supervisor

John McDonald

Songs

"Diamonds in the

Rough" by E. Craven,

S. Joyce, performed by

Lee Kernaghan; "She

Was Happy Till She Met

You" by J. Rodgers, Mc-

Williams, performed by

Rick Carey; "She'll Be

Gone" by Z. Denn, per-

formed by Terry Dean;

"Affairs of the Heart"

by A. Bowles, performed

by Jason Donovan;

"Could I Have This

Dance" by W. Holgt-

field, B. House, "Help

Me Make It Through

the Night" by Kris

Kristofferson, "I Wanna

Love You Like I Did

Before" by D. Smith,

N. Smith, performed

by Jason Donovan,

Danni Ella Baha;

"My Achin' Heart" by

G. Porter, performed

by Peter Phelps; "Old

Man Emu" by and

performed by John

Williamson; "Two

Strong Hearts" by

B. Woolley, A. Hill,

performed by Danni

Ella Baha

Choreography

Jan Bennett

Sound Editors

Steven Lambeth

Michael Garden

Ashley Grenville

ADR Editor

Wayne Hayes

Foley Editor

John Simpson

Sound Recordists

John Schiefelbein

Sound Mixers

Martin Dwin

Gethin Creagh

Dolby stereo

consultant:

Steve Murphy

Stunt Co-ordinator

Danny Baldwin

Armourer

Movie Ordinance

Cast

Jason Donovan

Mike Tyrrell

Angie Milliken

Chrissie Bright

Peter Phelps

Dozer Brennan

Max Cullen

Magistrate Roy

Hayley Toomey

Sam Tyrrell

Jocelyn Gabriel

Lisa Bright

Kit Taylor

Les Finnigan

Lee James

Craig McKeegan

Roger Ward

Merv Drysdale

Tim Gaffney

Doc

Kaye Stevenson

Yvonne Drysdale

Jeff Truman

Arthur Holdings

Kim Lynch

Graham Kingston

Steven Tandy

Roger Bright

Gerry Skilton

Kevin Burns

Charles Barry

Gary Burns

Jamie Rowe

Ray Burns

Joy Hruby

Mrs Burns

Travis Moore

Alan Petersee

Lindsay Norris

Show Judge

Paul Ensley

Guitarist

Malcolm Cork

Sergeant Mathews

Paul Doyle

Ju-jitsu Cop

Bea Howe

Show Cup Presenter

Dennis French

Russell Hinton

Paul McInerney

Peter Meredith

Barren Ottery

John Quinn

Christopher Treuer

Musicians

Kooroomba Banjo

Brigalow Wanderer III

Gregory Long

Boy Drummer

7,954 feet

88 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Chrissie Bright and her daughter Lisa are running away from Chrissie's unfaithful solicitor husband. They meet Mike Tyrrell in the Queensland Outback when his truck accidentally smashes into Chrissie's parked Mercedes. He offers to let them stay with him and his sister Sam until the local mechanic fixes the car. Chrissie learns that despite his impressive ranch, Mike is in deep debt to the bank, and may lose everything if his prize bull fails to win at the Brisbane show. After a frosty start, Mike and Chrissie warm to each other, especially after he discovers that she used to be a professional country and western singer he once admired. She helps him get back some stolen cattle from neighbouring farmers.

Mike enters a rodeo, and comes second to his old friend Dozer Brennan, who owes him money. Instead of repairing the debt, Dozer offers Mike a share in the profits of a fairground attraction he has bought. At a dance, Mike and Chrissie are cajoled into singing together on stage. Chrissie realises she has found her true vocation, and decides to go back into singing. When the local banker, Arthur, arrives to repossess the bull, Mike and Dozer get into a fist fight and are arrested. Chrissie, Sam and Lisa steal back the bull and take it to the Brisbane Show where it wins first prize. However, Chrissie is arrested. Her solicitor husband tries to defend her in court, but she decides to simply plead guilty and pay the A\$500 fine and stay with Mike until she can pay it off. As their love blossoms, so does her singing career.

Rough Diamonds is like a forgettable made-for-television film that could be programmed for the wee-est small hours of the morning and never noticed or remembered, even if it had been seen by an audience on the scale of the World Cup's. Were it not for the presence of faded starlet Jason Donovan as beleaguered rancher Mike, it is unlikely that it would have ever gained a theatrical release in this coun-

try. It will certainly do few favours for the generally good critical reputation of Australian cinema.

Despite the publicity's description of it as "an uniquely Australian story", *Rough Diamonds* seems remarkably like a hundred American westerns, except with eucalyptus trees and lots of "G'day"s. Considering the Outback setting, it lacks a single aboriginal character. The only topical allusion comes in an impassioned speech of Chrissie's about farmers having "to pay for the losses of celebrity businessmen", possibly a sly reference to the Alan Bond scandal. Bland and easily exportable, it slips down as unnoticeably as Australian lager. Much like the Australian soap operas on television, *Rough Diamonds* is simplistic, cheap, and poorly acted, yet it lacks the addiction-forming narrative tackiness that makes *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* so endearing.

Clearly aimed at a pre-teen audience, it harbours few pretensions about its cinematic merit, and gets on with its business of generating occasions for Jason Donovan to take off his shirt with merciful swiftness. The man who almost bankrupted *The Face* for reporting rumours that he was gay is given ample opportunity to display his butch charms. Cruising about the sets in rugged plaid shirts and blond streaks, crooning manfully with his characteristic weedy tenor, he looks unquestionably straight. The rest of the cast of vaguely familiar-looking Australian actors muddle along, obviously in awe of working with such a megastar of masculinity. Angie Milliken as Chrissie performs more than adequately and refrains from being upstagingly pretty. The real rising star to watch is Banjo, who plays the prize bull Brigalow Wanderer III. Apparently described in the script as a "deep thinker", he indeed looks wonderfully pensive, bullish and full of the sperm that the film keeps reminding us is so lucrative. It was a brave move on Donovan's part to consent to share the screen with another stud of such magnitude.

Leslie Felperin



Rough rider: Jason Donovan

The Shawshank Redemption

USA 1994

Director: Frank Darabont

Certificate
15

Distributor

Rank

Production Company

Castle Rock

Entertainment

Executive Producers

Liz Grotzer

David Lester

Producer

Niki Marvin

Production Supervisors

Kokayi Ampah

Sue Bea Montgomery

Production Office

Co-ordinator

Beth Hickman

Unit Production Manager

David Lester

Location Manager

Kokayi Ampah

Assistant Directors

John R. Woodward

Thomas Schellenberg

Michael Greenwood

Casting

Deborah Aquila

Associate:

Jane Shannon

Ohio:

D. Lynn Meyer

ADR Voice:

Barbara Harris

Screenplay

Frank Darabont

Based on the short

story *Rita Hayworth and*

Shawshank Redemption

by Stephen King

Script Supervisors

Sioux Richards

James Ellis

Director of Photography

Roger Deakins

Steadicam Operator

Gerrit Dangremont

Editor

Richard Francis-Bruce

Production Designer

Terence Marsh

Art Director

Peter Smith

Set Design

Antoinette Gordon

Joe Hodges

Set Decorator

Michael Sierton

Sot Dressers

Lee Baird

Christopher Neely

John M. Heuberger

Jack Hering

Storyboard Consultant

Peter Von Sholly

Special Effects

Bob Williams

Digital:

Motion Pixel

Corporation

Costume Design

Elizabeth McBride

Wardrobe Supervisor

Tanea Lednicki

Make-up

Kevin Haney

Monty Westmore

Jeni Lee Dinkel

Hairstylists

Phillip Ivey

Roy Bryson

Pamela Priest

Titles/Opticals

Pacific Title

Music

Thomas Newman

Orchestrations

Thomas Pasatieri

Music Editor

Bill Bernstein

Songs/Music Extract

"If I Didn't Care"

by Jack Lawrence,

performed by The

Inksots; "Put the

Blame on Mame" by

Allan Roberts, Doris

Fisher; "Lovesick Blues"

by Cliff Friend, Irving

Mills, performed by

Hank Williams; "Willie

and the Hand Jive" by

Johnny Otis, performed

by The Johnny Otis

Show; "The Marriage

of Figaro (Duetto

Sull'aria)" by Wolfgang

Amadeus Mozart,

performed by Deutsche

Oper Berlin, Karl Bohm

Supervising Sound Editor

John M. Stacy

Sound Editors

Bill Manger

Jeff Clark

Zack Davis

Dale Johnston

Larry Lester

Bruce Bell

Richard Oswald

ADR Supervisor

Petra Bach

ADR Editors

Robert Ulrich

Shelley Rae Hinton

Production Sound Mixer

Willie Burton

Mixing Recorders

Jack Keller

David Behle

Music Mixer

Dennis Sands

ADR Mixer

Tom O'Connell

Foley Mixer

Marilyn Graf

ADR Recordist

Rick Canelli

Foley Recordist

Ron Grafton

Re-recording Mixers

Robert J. Litt

Elliot Tyson

Michael Herbeck

Foley Artists

Kevin Bartnof

Ellen Heuer

Stunt Co-ordinator

Jerry Gatlin

Cast

Tim Robbins

Andy Dufresne

Morgan Freeman

Ellis Boyd "Red"

Redding

Bob Gunton

Warden Norton

William Sadler

Heywood

Clancy Brown

Captain Hadley

Gil Bellows

Tommy

Mark Rolston

Bogs Diamond

James Whitmore

Brooks Hatlen

Jeffrey DeMunn

1946 D.A.

Larry Brandenburg

Skeet

Neil Guntoli

Jigger

Brian Libby

Floyd

David Proval

Snooze

Joseph Ragno

Ernie

Jude Ciccolella

Guard Mert

Paul McCrane

Guard Trout

Renee Blaine

Andy Dufresne's Wife

Scott Mann

Glenn Quentin

John Horton

1946 Judge

Gordon C. Greene

1947 Parole Hearings

Man

Alfonso Freeman

Fresh Fish Con

V.J. Foster

Hungry Fish Con

John E. Summers

New Fish Guard

Frank Medrano

Fat Ass

Mack Miles

Tyrell

Alan R. Kessler

Laundry Bob

Morgan Lund

Laundry Truck Driver

Cornell Wallace

Laundry Leonard

Gary Lee Davis

Rooster

Neil Summers

Pete

Ned Bellamy

Guard Youngblood

Joseph Pecoraro

Projectionist

Harold E. Cope Jr

Hole Guard

Brian Delate

Guard Dekins

Don R. McManus

Guard Wiley

Donald E. Zinn

Moresby Batter

Dorothy Silver

1954 Landlady

Robert Haley

1954 Food-Way

Manager

Dana Snyder

1954 Food-Way Woman

John D. Craig

1957 Parole

Hearings Man

Ken Magee

Ned Grimes

Eugene C. DePasquale

Mail Caller

Bill Bolander

Elmo Blatch

Ron Newell

Elderly Hole Guard

John R. Woodward

Bullhorn Tower Guard

Chuck Brauchler

Man Missing Guard

Dion Anderson

Head Bull Haig

Claire Stiemmer

Bank Teller

James Kisicki

Bank Manager

Rohn Thomas

Bugle Editor

Charlie Kearns

1966 D.A.

Rob Reider

Duty Guard

Brian Brophy

1967 Parole

Hearings Man

Paul Kennedy

1967 Food-Way

Manager

12,812 feet

142 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Technicolor

1946. On trial for murdering his wife and her lover, Andy Dufresne, a mild-mannered New England banker who claims he is innocent, is given a double life sentence and sent to Shawshank State Prison. He strikes up a friendship with Red, a fellow prisoner who has already served 20 years of his life sentence, and who does a flourishing trade smuggling goods into the penitentiary. Andy is sent to work in the laundry, where one day he is attacked by some fellow inmates led by the mean Bogs. The beatings become a regular occurrence. One day, Andy overhears one of the guards talking about his finances and offers him advice; soon he is acting as broker for all the guards. After a particularly savage attack by Bogs, Andy spends a month in the infirmary. Red procures various gifts for Andy including a Rita Hayworth poster, which takes pride of place in Andy's cell. The warden sends

Andy to work in the library, where he runs his financial advice shop. Andy starts writing to the State to request better library facilities. Meanwhile Brooks, a veteran prisoner, finds that his parole has come through; once outside, he commits suicide. This news upsets Andy and Red. After years of writing to the State, funds come through to improve the library.

The Rita pin-up is replaced by one of Marilyn Monroe. The warden decides to set up a 'inside out' programme with the prisoners working in the community; this transpires to be a scam for the warden to make money. Andy is requested to cook the books, and invents a silent partner, 'Randall Stevens', in whose account the money is stored. Meanwhile Raquel Welch replaces Monroe. A new young inmate, Tommy, tells Andy that on a previous sentence, he shared a cell with a man who confessed to murdering a young banker's wife and her lover - the crime Andy was wrongly convicted of. Andy goes to the warden, who is uncooperative; Andy refers to the warden's scam, and is sent to solitary. Meanwhile the warden has Tommy shot. Andy confides to Red about his dreams of living in Mexico, and tells his friend that if he should ever get out, he should go and dig up a box that he once hid while courting with his wife. That night Andy disappears. Over the years he has been digging a tunnel, with his posters hiding the hole. Writing to the police, he informs them about the warden's corruption. At the same time he is able to assume the identity of Randall Stevens and reap the rewards. Months later Red is granted parole and ends up in the same halfway house that Brooks stayed in. Contemplating suicide, Red decides to look for Andy's box. Finding it, he discovers a wad of money and directions to Mexico. Red jumps bail and meets up with Andy in his dream location.

With its unlikely coincidences and upbeat denouement, this is the prison movie as male melodrama par excellence. In a film where the only women are either feckless and dead (the prologue contains a brief peek of

Dufresne's wife) or pin-ups, it is also very much a nostalgic, 'platonic' male romance that yearns for an uncomplicated time when men could be men in the movies. Spanning the years 1945 to 1967, it could conceivably have been made during that period. Its liberal intentions and strong sense of performance also hanker for an era of quality cinema when actors could be giants. The towering Tim Robbins has a solidity and gentle interiority that occasionally reminds one here of Burt Lancaster. Of equal excellence is Morgan Freeman as Red, who holds the film together with his poetic, often quipping narration. These are two good, highly likeable men whose moral worth is never in question. Their different social backgrounds are levelled by this, as much as by the fact that they have been brought together to be part of a very particular community. (Though they are both inside, there is still some sense of differentiation: the working-class Red helps his fellow inmates by procuring cigarettes and whisky, while the Ivy League-educated Andy aspires to build up the library.)

In opposition to Red, Andy and their small band of friends - including Brooks, an insular veteran on whose interests are an obvious nod to *The Bird Man of Alcatraz* - are the corrupt officials who perpetuate a regime of hardship. Like many a Warner Bros film before it, *The Shawshank Redemption* is keen to reveal how damaging prison life can be. In the opening scenes, a new recruit is beaten senseless by the guards because he cries in the night. Equally brutal is the inmate Bogs, whose gang attempts to rape Andy. Red refers to them as 'queers'. In the context of this film, it acts like a disclaimer. 'Queer' means over there, different and dangerous in its violent manifestation of masculinity, and nothing to do with the admiration that Red has for Andy. (He says of him "some birds ought not to be caged, their feathers are too bright".) Andy is intimately related to all that is beautiful in Red's world, as in one scene when Andy hijacks the prison intercom system and broadcasts an aria from *The Marriage of Figaro*. The music gives Red a "heartache". Such lyricism seeks to be a cover for any desire that there may be between the two.

Likewise, the presence of the ultimate cover girl Rita Hayworth speaks volumes. She is after all the great disclaimer in *Gilda*, a film bubbling with repressed male desire, which the Shawshank boys watch several times over. Her presence in that film too might be described as being paper thin. In *The Shawshank Redemption*, she is the first in a succession of women whose function is deceptive. The posters serve to hide Andy's secret (and the tunnel, which connects up with the sewage drains, seems to be a very specific sort of back passage). It provides a means for the great escape to a utopic future. Sun, sea and freedom in Mexico - the euphoric ending to many a story of love on the run.

Lizzie Francke

Solitaire for Two

United Kingdom 1994

Director: Gary Sinyor

Certificate
15
Distributor
Entertainment
Production Company
Solitaire Productions
Executive Producer
Nigel Savage
Co-executive Producers
Andrew Cohen
Stephen Alexander
Paul Brooks
Co-producers
Gary Sinyor
Richard Holmes
Associate Producer
Nick O'Hagan
Production Co-ordinator
Pierre Chandlee
Location Managers
Tim Porter
Diana Gregson
Post-production Co-ordinator
Mick McAloon
Assistant Directors
Aidan Boulter
Lulu M. Hordle
Jon Harris
Casting
Emma Style
Screenplay
Gary Sinyor
Script Supervisor
Vivienne Royal
Director of Photography
Henry Braham
Camera Operator
Nick Milner
Steadicam Operators
Simon Bray
Michael O'Halloran
Editor
Ewa J. Lind
Production Designer
Carmel Collins
Art Director
Tim Ellis
Set Decorator
John Hand
Special Effects
Any Effects
Costume Design
Rodger Parker
Make-up
Design:
Jacqueta
Artist
Sue Thompson
Additional Hairstylist
Emma Bailey
Titles/Opticals
Cine Image Film Opticals
Music
David A. Hughes
John Murphy
Music Performed by
David A. Hughes
John Murphy
Saxophones/Flute:
Martin Green
Music Producers
David A. Hughes
John Murphy
Music Supervisor
Olav Wyper
Songs/Music Extracts
"Love is the Drug" by Bryan Ferry, Andrew Mackay, performed by Roxy Music; "She's My Mrs" by Fairbrass, Manzoli, Fairbrass, performed by Right Said Fred; "All the Love We Need" by David A. Hughes, John Murphy, performed by Amanda Dillon; "Just Let Love Through" by David A. Hughes, John Murphy, performed by Thomas Lang; "Violin Concerto No. 1" by Pietro Locatelli, performed by Chris Couzens, Jonathan Evan-Jones; "Violin concerto no. 1" by Brunch; "Requiem in D Minor" by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Supervising Dialogue Editor
Jaime McCoan

Sound Editors
Laura Lovejoy
Dialogue:
Jim Roddan
John Poyner
Jacques Leroide
Sound Recordists
Stuart Wilson
ADR Mixers
Ted Swanscott
Thomas F. Lewis
Sound Re-recording Mixer
Hugh Strain
Foley Editor
Jacques Leroide
Foley Artists
Julie Ankerson
John Fewell
Police Consultants
Cop on the Box
Stunt Co-ordinator
Rod Woodruff

Cast
Mark Frankel
Daniel Becker
Amanda Pays
Katie
Roshan Seth
Sandip Tamar
Jason Isaacs
Harry
Maryam D'Albo
Caroline
Helen Lederer
Malcolm Cooper
Cops
Annette Crosbie
Mrs Dwyer
Neil Mullarkey
Parris
Liza Walker
Lucy
Right Said Fred
Themselves
Kelly Salmon
Young Katie in Garden
Ricky Jones
Young Boy in Garden
Diana Eszell
Squeegie Girl
Robert Harley
Busby Man/Barman
Colin Wakefield
Phil Fox
Businessmen
Michael Shaw
Alistair Cameron
Scientists
Carli Harris
Clare
Rosalind Knight
Receptionist
Michael Schneider
Vincenzo Angelino
Paul Simpkin
Waiter
Jestyn Phillips
Middle-aged Man on Tube
Joan Blackham
Middle-aged Woman on Tube
David Fishley
Casually Dressed Man on Tube
Caroline Liddy
Young Woman on Tube
Norman Caro
Joe the Florist
Isobel Raine
Wet 'n' Wild Assistant
Geoffrey Deane
Mick Pilsworth
John Lahr
Tony Banks
Arthur Smith
Men in Bookshop
John Levitt
Sharples
Catherine Russell
Julie Parris
Otto Jarman
Stefan Schwartz
Neighbours

9.564 feet
106 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour
Eastman Color

Daniel Becker is a behavioural psychologist who lectures on body language to power-oriented businessmen. He regularly uses his knowledge to manipulate actual or potential sexual partners. His attention is drawn to Katie, a lecturer in palaeontology. He finds her instantly sexually attractive, but is shocked when she lashes out at him with a karate blow. Later, surreptitiously, Daniel observes her obsessively tidying her notes, and he sets up an encounter through which Katie cannot help but read their mutual compatibility.

Despite her initial interest, she declines his invitation to dinner. Their paths cross at a marriage guidance bureau - Katie is arguing with the bureau's director, he has been sent by his colleague Harry and Harry's wife Caroline 'to prove willing' to undertake a serious emotional commitment. Daniel renews the invitation and this time Katie agrees and confounds his expectations by turning up punctually. Over an uncomfortable meal, she reveals a nervous habit of completing other people's sentences - the result of combining a high degree of defensiveness with an astounding ability to read minds. Dinner ends disastrously when she physically attacks a waiter for his unuttered, but undoubtedly lascivious train of thought.

Daniel considers dropping Katie but is encouraged to persevere by Harry and Caroline and by a local traffic policewoman of his acquaintance. Katie too has her defences against serious entanglement. She turns up at Daniel's flat with fellow palaeontologist Sandip Tamar, with whom she may go to India to research a missing link in human evolution.

Katie becomes jealous, having 'read' Daniel's dream about making love to Caroline. When Sandip gets his grant confirmed, she decides to go with him to India and is doubly convinced when Daniel holds a vulgar surprise party at the Natural History Museum to announce their marriage - Daniel has taken her hesitation over his proposal as assent. Katie leaves with Sandip. When she realises that he too is sexually attracted to her, she realises that she loves Daniel. She finally discovers him asleep at their private hideaway on Hampstead Heath. They agree to marry.

Gary Sinyor's second feature moves him up a rung or two from *Leon the Pig Farmer*. He demonstrates a tighter hold on narrative, with a good cast and a *mise en scène* persuasively in tune with the protagonists' emotional climate. It is good to see fresh London locations chosen and used with care, a professional use of sets and production design that benefits from association with Laura Ashley without ending up as an animated shopping catalogue. Screwball comedy is surely a genre worth exploring, giving occasion for romance, slapstick, sophisticated humour, and a critique of sexual and social mores. Given the film's Natural History Museum location and palaeon-



Only game in town: Amanda Pays

tologist protagonist, Sinyor cannot avoid the comparison with Hawks' *Bringing Up Baby*, but in tinkering in a rather ill thought-out way with that film's astute view of relations between the sexes, Sinyor sets his film more towards Doris Day/Rock Hudson territory than that of Hepburn/Grant.

Amanda Pays' palaeontologist shows the notion of the career woman to be inherently unfeasible. Katie is nervous, obsessive and defensive to the point of actual aggression. Archaically, the script lands her in the position of having to choose between career and marriage - apparently without irony. Sinyor's tendency to dust off and bring out stereotypes, rather than to actually re-think characters and situations, means that science must inevitably be depicted as a dry and dusty occupation rather than as a passion that could rival or complement that of love. Again, the genre can assimilate slapstick but this film seems so embarrassed by Katie's semi-voluntary recourse to karate that it barely occasions discussion, yet stylistically it marks a slip into the world of cartoon action.

Katie's ability to read minds may look like a way of milking easy laughs but it brings a series of problems in its train. Daniel's worst nightmares concerning close personal relationships are confirmed when Katie invades his sleeping mind, yet nowhere are these fears fully addressed. Scenes in which Katie dons a blindfold to avoid reading (male) minds - such as the book shop scene in which the entire male clientele is thinking about her sexually - are a recipe for a more nightmarish paranoia than the script can deal with.

Sinyor opts too often for the large close-up (a victim here of both Hollywood and the tendency to view on video). The director remarks in the press notes on the 'American look' he wanted for his film. Paradoxically, one of the film's more enjoyable qualities is its unforced Englishness. Had Sinyor's delivery been equally unforced, he might have brought off a promisingly light and wryly observant comedy of sometimes botched manners.

Verina Glaessner

Stargate

USA 1994

Director: Roland Emmerich

Certificate
PG
Distributor
Guild
Production Company
Le Studio Canal (US) +/
Centropolis Film
production
In association with
Carloco Pictures
Executive Producer
Mario Kassar
Producers
Joel B. Michaels
Oliver Eberle
Dean Devlin
Co-producer
Ute Emmerich
Associate Producer
Peter Winther
Production Associate
Diana Villa
Production Co-ordinator
Sheila Warner
Unit Production Managers
Donald Heitzer
Ramsey Thomas
Location Manager
Kenneth E. Fix
Post-production Supervisor
Candace Cornell
Assistant Directors
Steve Love
Kim Winther
Michael Viglietta
Jeffrey Crawford
Ted Diamandopolis
Casting
April Webster
Screenplay
Dean Devlin
Roland Emmerich
Kay Sweeney
Model Unit:
Gretchen Oehler
Director of Photography
Karl Walter Lindenlaub
Model Unit Photography
Jonathan Taylor
Karl Walter Lindenlaub
Peter Krause
Camera Operators
Peter Krause
Chris Haarhoff
Animation:
Joseph Thomas
Steadicam Operator
Chris Haarhoff
Visual Effects
Supervisor:
Kit West
Editor:
Mark Eggenweiler
Digital Visual Effects
Kleiser-Walczak
Construction Company
Executive Producers:
Jeff Kleiser
Diana Walczak
Supervisors:
Jeffrey A. Okun
Producers:
Jeffrey A. Diamond
Michael Van
Himbergen
Technical Supervisor:
Derry Frost
Line Producer:
Robert O'Haver
Production Manager:
Thomas M. Boland
Domino Digital Composites/Opticals
Cinema Research
Corporation
Artists:
Mitch S. Drain
Brian Hanable
Dion Hatch
Optical/Digital Animation Effects
Available Light Ltd
Graphics
Daniel Camejo
Computer Design
Antoine Bonsorte

Animation Design/ Supervisor
John T. Van Vliet
Animation Effects
Producer:
Katherine Kean
Video Playback:
Peter Mitchell Rubin
Senior Animators
Eileen O'Neill
Jeffrey A. Williams
Animators
Mark M. Pompian
Mary Nelson
Michael Rivero
Patsy Frost
Randy Bauer
Art Morel
January Nordman
Clint Colver
Bill Arance
Rotomasters
Alexander R. Pitt
Meg Freeman
Editors
Michael J. Duthie
Derek Brechlin
Production Designer
Holger Gross
Art Directors
Peter Murton
Frank Bollinger
Yuma:
Mark Zuelzke
Set Design
Steven Alesch
Mick Cukurs
Casting
Luis Hoyos
Barbara Ann Jaekel
Patrick Janicke
Patricia Klawonn
Clare Scarpulla
Set Decorator
Jim Erickson
Set Dressers
Jeff Debell
J. Gregory Evans
Chris Fielding
James Malley
Herb Morris
Mark Sakamoto
Josh Warner
Co-ordinator:
Wendy Murray
Model Unit:
Jeff Hay
Conceptual Design
Oliver Scholl
Conceptual Illustrators
Simon Murton
Derek Gogol
Production Illustrator
Peter Mitchell Rubin
Scenic Supervisor
Jon P. Mooers
Scenic Artist
Dan Dorfer
Sculptures
Art Sculpture and
Production Inc.
Michael Hosch
Tully Summers
Model Unit Co-ordinators
Robert Brown
Frank Vittori
Special Effects
Supervisors:
Trevor Wood
John Cazin
Co-ordinator:
Amanda Cerney
Special Creature Effects
Patrick Tatopoulos
Mechanical Effects
Supervisors
Wayne Beauchamp
Russell Shinkle
Hair:
Stuart Artingsall
Costume Design
Joseph Porro
Ra's Headdress/Anubis' & Horus' Costumes:
Patrick Tatopoulos
Costume Supervisors
Garet Reilly

Make-up Artists

Greg Nelson
Lisa Collins
Dennis Liddiard

Hair

Lori Guidroz
Beth Miller

Title Design

Anthony Goldschmidt

Titles

Pacific Title

Music

David Arnold
Music Performed by
Sinfonia of London
Egyptian Percussion:
Hossam Ramzey

Orchestrations

Nicholas Dodd

Supervising Music Editor

Laurie Higgins Tobias

Supervising Sound Editors

Sandy Gendler
Val Kuklowsky

Sound Editors

Noah Blough
Michael Dandy
Cameron Frankley

Mike Goodman

Harry Harris

Andrea Horta

Lenny Jennings

Mark La Pointe

Raoul

Mike Szakmeister

Bill Van Daelen

Ben Wilkins

Daniel Yale

Production Sound Mixer

David Ronne

ADR Mixer

Jeff Courtie

ADR Recordists

Evelyn Hokanson

Barbara McCart

Foley Recordists

Tony Van Den Akker

Lou Solakofski

Dolby Stereo

Consultant:

Robert S. Warren

Sound Re-recordists

Patrick Cycone Jnr

Greg P. Russell

Processed Sound Effects

Alan Howarth

Jon Johnson

Ken Johnson

Special:

John Paul Fasal

Foley Artists

Andy Malcolm

Terry Burke

Group ADR Co-ordinator

Burton Sharp

Ancient Egyptian

Language Re-creation/

Egyptology Consultant

Stuart Smith

Stunt Co-ordinator

Andy Armstrong

Viveca Lindfors

Catherine

Alexis Cruz

Skaara

Mili Avital

Sha'uri

Leon Rippey

General W.O. West

John Diehl

Lieutenant Kawalski

Carlos Lauchu

Anubis

Djimon

Horus

Erick Avari

Kasuf

French Stewart

Lieutenant Feretti

Gianin Loffler

Nabeh

Christopher John Fields

Lieutenant Freeman

Derek Webster

Lieutenant Brown

Jack Moore

Lieutenant Reilly

Steve Ciannelli

Lieutenant Porro

David Pressman

Assistant Lieutenant

Scott Smith

Officer

Cecil Hoffman

Sarah O'Neil

Rae Allen

Barbara Stone

Richard Kind

Gary Meyers

John Storey

Mitch

Lee Taylor-Allan

Jenny

George Gray

Technician

Kelly Wint

Young Catherine

Erik Holland

Professor Langford

Nick Wilder

Foreman Taylor

Sayed Badreya

Arabic Interpreter

Michel Conception

First Horus

Jerry Gilmore

Second Horus

Michael Jean-Phillipe

Third Horus

Dialy M'Daie

Fourth Horus

Gladys Holland

Roger Til

Kenneth Danziger

Christopher West

Professors

Robert Ackerman

Companion

Kieron Lee

Masked Ra

Frank Welker

Voice of Mastadje



Mummy's boys: James Spader, Kurt Russell

Jackson needs to find a key to the other stargate before the team can return. The amulet, which Catherine has given Jackson, convinces a local human chieftain that the Americans have come from the Gods, and Jackson learns from hieroglyphs that the inhabitants of the planet are descended from kidnapped ancient Egyptians. The absolute ruler of the world is Ra, an alien intelligence who lives on in the eternally renewed body of one of the Egyptians. Having been thrown off Earth by a slave revolt, Ra oppresses his people. O'Neil has brought an atom bomb to close the gate if he perceives a threat to Earth, but Ra gets hold of the device.

Jackson falls in love with Sha'uri, daughter of the chieftain, while O'Neil finds a substitute son in Sha'uri's brother Skaara. Jackson is killed and then revived by Ra, who tells him he plans to avenge himself on Earth by transmitting O'Neil's bomb back there along with a mineral which will boost its destructive power a hundredfold. The Americans lead a revolt against Ra, and the slaves rally to overthrow Ra's goons. Ra's pyramid spaceship takes off but O'Neil and Jackson teleport the bomb into it, destroying the tyrant. Jackson opts to stay with Sha'ura, while the surviving soldiers return to Earth.

Enormous production values, seamless special effects and an old-fashioned deployment of huge sets and armies of extras are harnessed in the service of an amazingly ramshackle script that recycles pulpy chunks of the lesser science fiction stories of the 30s and the 'lost world' romances of Rider Haggard and his imitators. While a very few elements, such as the growling GI who has the archetypal grunt name of 'Kawalski', suggest nostalgic knowingness of cliché, this is mainly played remarkably straight. Director Emmerich hammers home every point with undue emphasis: Kurt Russell is first seen contemplating his gun and his son's photograph as he sits gloomily in the kid's abandoned room, but a couple of lesser characters then have to discuss the boy's death to make sure that those at

the back of the class who haven't been paying attention get the point.

As the plot zooms to the other side of the universe, things get even sillier: Jackson only admits he can't make the stargate work both ways once they've arrived, then spends odd moments contemplating hieroglyphs to work out how it works, though the evil Ra seems quite willing to set the co-ordinates when it comes to sending back Earth's bomb. That Americans – who have somehow gained possession of an historical artefact unearthed in Egypt and feel empowered to act on behalf of all humanity – send Ra the bomb that threatens the home planet is less an irony than lazy plotting. This lack of focus becomes disastrous in the finale as three climaxes – the slave revolt, Jackson trying to revive his temporarily dead love interest, a fistfight between O'Neil and the head goon – are cut against each other, with the bomb ticking away in the background.

The 'heart-warming' business of O'Neil's relationship with a desert urchin is extremely tiresome, but the equally clichéd relationship of the eager Jackson and the winning Sha'ura is a more acceptable evocation of the native romances of Hollywood sarong epics. Jaye Davidson, a limited performer who has miraculously found another part only he could play, swans about in Egyptian frocks and a computer-generated shape-shifting head-dress as the evil Ra, merging from a Dr Phibes-style hi-tech sarcophagus to add a welcome note of Edgar Rice Burroughs-ish camp to the surprisingly stolid desert rebellion plot. There is a smug element of unattractive patronising as slaves whipped up against their masters act like every American administration's fantasy of a grateful Third World populace begging for military aid. They are presumably capable of abandoning the Ancient Egyptian system, all they've known, for a simulation of parliamentary democracy. The triteness is such that Jackson's decision to stay behind with his native girl prompts less romantic admiration than wonderment that anyone would volunteer to spend the rest of his life on a planet without dentists.

Kim Newman

Suture

USA 1993

Directors: Scott McGehee, David Siegel

Certificate

15

Distributor

ICA

Production Company

Kino-Korsakoff

Executive Producers

Steven Soderbergh

Michele Halberstadt

Producers

Scott McGehee

David Siegel

Co-producer

Alison Brantley

Buddy Enright

Laura Gropp

Line Producer

Buddy Enright

Associate Producer

Eileen Jones

Production Co-ordinator

Kris Nielson

Location Manager

Tim Bowen

Assistant Directors

Laura Gropp

Carol O'Neil

Linda Lea

Athena Alexander

Casting

Sally Dennison

Jennifer Richardson

Associate:

Patricia Troy

Screenplay

Scott McGehee

David Siegel

Script Supervisor

Hilary Momberger

Director of Photography

Greg Gardiner

2nd Unit Camera Operator

Robert Fitzgerald

Editor

Laura Zuckerman

Production Designer

Kelly McGehee

Set Decorator

Nanci Wenz

Steven James Rice

Costume Design

Mette Hansen

Make-up/Hair

Katherine James

Lynn E. Champagne

Special Make-up Effects

David Ayres

Title Design

Catherine Lorenz

Titles/Opticals

Cinema Research

Corporation

Music

Cary Berger

Music Performed by

Cary Berger

Kathleen Hood

Jim McGrath

Music Supervisor

Dana Sano

Patrick Rush

Music Co-ordinator

Barklie K. Griggs

Adam Maffei

Songs/Music Extracts

"Muchas Gracias"

by T. Kukules, M. Di

Cara, performed by

Salsa Piccante; "Ring

of Fire" by Merle

Kilgore, June Carter,

performed by 1) Johnny

Cash, 2) Tom Jones;

"(The Guests') Arrival

at Wartburg" from

</

● Clay Arlington arrives in Phoenix to meet his halfbrother Vincent Towers, whom he encountered at the funeral of their wealthy and powerful father Arthur, who was murdered. Vincent is suspected of the crime. Inviting Clay to stay at his home, Vincent informs him that he has to leave overnight on business and asks him to drive him to the airport. The car is rigged to explode and, before departing, Vincent triggers the car bomb. Dressed in Vincent's clothes and carrying identification Vincent has planted on him, Clay survives the explosion, but suffers from complete amnesia. Requiring extensive plastic surgery, Clay is remade as Vincent. Two specialists treat him; plastic surgeon Dr Renée Descartes and psychoanalyst Dr Max Shinoda. Shinoda begins to discover elements of a personality that do not tally with Vincent's cold and anti-social reputation.

The Phoenix police continue their murder investigation, questioning a witness who claims to remember clearly the killer's face. The opportunity to identify Vincent must wait for his plastic surgery to be completed. Meanwhile, Clay begins to recall details of his past in dreams and flashbacks which confirm Shinoda's suspicions that Vincent Towers is someone completely different. On leaving hospital, Clay moves into Vincent's house and remains haunted by dreams in which he remembers himself as an impoverished crane operator and visualises a dusty, rundown town. Under analysis, it transpires that the place he remembers is called Needles. Accompanied by Descartes, who is in no doubt that he is Vincent Towers, Clay visits Needles but finds it ugly, depressing and without memories. The two of them spend the night together in a motel.

The police call in Clay for the line-up, but the witness cannot identify Vincent and the investigation is terminated. Clay is suspicious that he is still being tailed, but on telephoning the police, is assured that they no longer suspect him. The phone call triggers his memory of the call that Vincent made to him in the car before the explosion. It is Vincent who has returned to kill Clay, who stands to inherit their father's wealth. Vincent breaks into the house but is shot by Clay.



Shades of meaning: Michael Harris

In their final session, Dr Shinoda attempts to persuade his patient to acknowledge his true identity as Clay Arlington; "I am Vincent Towers", is his obstinate response.

● Suture, the noun, comes with three definitions: one each from medicine, Lacanian psychoanalysis and 70s French film theory. *Suture* the film deploys all three in a generic cocktail of paranoid thriller, *film noir* and American avant-garde. The first definition simply means the stitching together of a wound. The second concerns the relationship between the individual subject and its place within language and derives from Lacan's celebrated dictum that "the unconscious is structured like a language".

The psychoanalytical idea of "suture" refers to processes by which the subject is "stitched into" language or a chain of discourse which both defines and is defined by the work of the unconscious. In the late 60s, theorist Jean-Pierre Oudart applied this idea of suture to cinema contending that the psychic processes which constitute subjectivity are reiterated in film by operations such as shot/reverse-shot which bind the spectator into the coherence of the filmic system. If the unconscious is structured like a language, then one such language that discloses this structuring is cinema.

While it is perfectly possible to appreciate McGehee and Siegel's film knowing nothing of psychoanalytic film theory, the film-makers have clearly constructed their film to accommodate several layers of pleasure and interpretation. One such level is that of *Suture's* genre and tone. Generically the film sits somewhere between Hitchcock's *Spellbound*, which the film-makers acknowledge as the source of the basic story of an amnesiac suspected of murder, and John Frankenheimer's *Seconds*, in its concern with an identity transformed by plastic surgery.

In tone, however, *Suture* veers dangerously close at times to *Twilight Zone* parody spookiness. This impression is reinforced by voice-over interjections at the film's beginning and end by Freudian analyst Dr Shinoda - whose office is emblazoned with two huge Rorschach ink-blots. Presenting the psychoanalyst's attempt to delve into Vincent/Clay's authentic personality in semi-parodic terms makes it as doubt-

ful a method of evaluating the truth as those represented by police Lt. Weismann and plastic surgeon Dr Renée Descartes. The police case against Vincent/Clay rests on the testimony of an partially blinded eye witness who must identify someone who has undergone extensive plastic surgery. The futility of such an investigation is ironically juxtaposed with the plastic surgeon's devotion to the pseudo-science of physiognomy which, resting on Italian Renaissance ideals of beauty, declares that personality is legible through physical features. That the plastic surgeon should be named Descartes screams out that *Suture* has intentions beyond the capable remodelling of genre premises, it wants also to deconstruct their underlying philosophical presuppositions.

Conceptual ambition is matched by formal audacity - Clay, Vincent's halfbrother is played by Dennis Haysbert, a black actor whose blackness is never acknowledged. It acts as a distancing effect: while the characters don't see Clay as a black man, we do. It's a nice idea but, in execution, a host of implied ideological problems remain unaddressed. It also returns us to the notion of suture because, as spectators, we are constantly aware of the illusory, incomplete nature of identification with screen characters. In this sense, it is a winning strategy, working with the film's conclusion that Clay, by denying his real identity, is living a lie with potentially disastrous psychological repercussions.

Suture also brings this formally disorientating approach to bear on the editing, where an apparently normal continuity cut within a scene will jarringly displace us from one space to another, and, in the use of overlapping sound where one scene intrudes aurally into another, each technique serving to disallow the easy "suturing" of the spectator into the film.

Vincent's pad, a plush modernist rotunda, is as half-unpacked and as yet un-lived-in as the shifting personality of Clay/Vincent. Clay's memory returns in flashes and dreams, triggered by everyday events, such as a phone call to the police after they have concluded their investigation. Vincent returns like a repressed memory, but armed with a gun and he has to be denied by Clay, who kills him by shooting off his face. The call to the police that Clay makes revives his memory of the call that Vincent made to him on the car phone just before the explosion. Crucially, this moment has the cumulative effect of Clay's total remembrance of his past - from hereon in, the implication is that Clay is fully conscious of his imposture.

In the light of this, the film's closing images - a series of still photos of Clay and Renée holidaying socialising and playing the beautiful couple - take on the pathos of a life lived purely as social performance and surface appearance, but whose reality speaks of entrapment, imprisonment and psychic entropy.

Chris Darke

Totally F***ed Up

USA 1993

Director: Gregg Araki

Certificate

Not yet issued

Distributor

Dangerous To Know

Production Company

desperate pictures
In association with
blurco
muscle + hate studios

Producers

Andrea Sperling

Gregg Araki

Associate Producer

Alberto Garcia

Screenplay

Gregg Araki

Lighting

Todd Verow

Pryor Praczkowski

Camera Operator

Gregg Araki

Editor

Gregg Araki

Make-up

Victoria Levy

Song Extracts

"Motor Skill", "Will",
"Wisdom", "Down-
time", "Hate Rivet" by
and performed by 16
Volt; "Just One Fix"
by and performed by
Ministry; "Teenage
Suicide", "Angel I'll
Walk You Home",
"Six Layer Cake" by
and performed by
Unrest; "Katy Song",
"Mistress" (piano
version), "Down
Colorful Hill" by M.
Kozelek, performed
by Red House Painters;
"Time(less)", "Angel",
"Sucker (MF)", by Allen,
Cox, Gray, performed
by The Wolfgang Press;
"Devil Does Drugs" by
and performed by My
Life with the Thrill Kill
Kult; "The Torso",
"Lord Make Me a
Channel of Your
Peace", "Sick", "Lip"
by and performed by
His Name is Alive;
"Nose Dive" by Dan
Gatto, Daniel Vahnke,
performed by The
Recliner; "Thekadout",
"Mindfuck", "Motor-
toolappliance",
"Reality", "Worst
Case Scenario" by
and performed by
Babyland; "Never-
ending Night", "A
Thousand Stars Burst
Open" by and
performed by Pale
Saints; "Head On"
by William Reid, Jim
Reid, performed by
The Jesus & Mary
Chain; "Vapour Trail"

by and performed by
Ride; "Windowpane",
"Who'll Toil",
"Exploding Perms"
by and performed by
Coil; "Meniscus" by
D. Curtis, performed
by This Mortal Coil;
"Shithammer",
"Headcrash" by Don
Gordon, Conan Hunter,
performed by Numb
Sound
Marianne Dissard
Post-production Sound
Alberto Garcia
Additional Sound
Laurel Waco
Do-It-All Jesus
Erik Nakamura

Cast

James Duval
Andy
Roko Belic
Tommy
Susan Behshid
Michele
Jenene Gill
Patricia
Gilbert Luna
Steven
Lance May
Deric
Alan Boyce
Ian
Craig Gilmore
Brendan
Nicole Gillenberg
Dominatrix
Johanna Went
Excalibur Lady
Robert McHenry
Andy's Trick
Brad Mink
"Don't ouch
Mine" Costanza
Everett
Dan and Smith of Babyland
Club Band
Joyce Brouwers
Deric's Mom
Clay Walker
Homeless AIDS Guy
Aymee Valdes
Hysterical Bloody Lady
Cooper
PeepLee Lee
Marcus Hu
Fagbashers
Jon Gerrans
Trashbag Slave
David Finklestein
Woof Woof Doggie
Pryor Praczkowski
BVD Corpse

16 mm
3,000 feet
80 minutes

Dolby stereo
in colour

● The film opens with a newspaper clipping, reporting that gay kids form a disproportionately high percentage of teenage suicides. In 15 numbered chapters, the film presents a group portrait of six gay/lesbian teenagers in present-day Los Angeles.

1: Film school student Steven is making a video documentary about the lives of his friends: Andy, who describes himself as "totally fucked up" and thinks he may be bisexual; Tommy, a boyish skateboarder; Deric (Steven's steady boyfriend), who paints and plans to start college soon; and the lesbian couple Michele and Patricia. ►

◀ All of them find life boring. 2: The six talk about their experiences of sex in the age of Aids. Tommy is the only one relaxed about casual sex. 3: Everyone in the group enjoys getting high. 4: While Michele shops for Patricia's birthday, Steven confides his fear of settling down with Deric. Patricia longs to have a fatherless child.

5: Most of the six want to believe in love; Andy is adamant that it is a non-existent fantasy. After another dull evening, the boys head home discussing the sexuality of well-known movie and rock stars. For his video, Steven asks them about masturbation. 6: The girls ask the boys to pool specimens of their sperm, in an attempt to artificially inseminate Patricia. 7: The six feel alienated from both society and mainstream gay culture. One night Andy is cruised by Ian, who aspires to write like novelist Dennis Cooper. They agree to meet for a date.

8: Tommy has one-off sex in a car with Everett. Steven comes home from casual sex with Brendan to find a note from his mother that Deric called twice. At the end of a relaxed evening together, Andy allows Ian to seduce him. 9: Andy asks Tommy about submitting to sodomy. Steven confides to Michele that he was unfaithful to Deric, but starts lying to Deric to fob him off. 10: Andy feels a growing attachment to Ian, unaware that Ian has other boyfriends. Deric watches Steven's unedited tapes and comes across his confession of infidelity; enraged and deeply hurt, Deric storms out. Tommy's parents discover that he is gay and throw him out of the house; he moves in to stay with Deric.

11: Steven sends Deric a videotaped apology, but Deric can't forgive him. Andy is stood up by Ian, and gets his answerphone when he calls. 12: Deric, thinking of cruising the night streets, is beaten up by queerbashers. He calls Steven, who rushes him to hospital and fetches the others. Andy visits Ian's apartment in the small hours and finds that he has company already. 13: Andy feels mentally broken. 14: Deric convalesces at home, but still refuses to take calls from Steven. Andy visits him, reporting that his "love affair" is over. At night, Andy cruises and has casual sex with a stranger. 15: Steven picks a fight with Tommy. Andy totters home and tries to phone his friends, getting either no answer or busy tones. He downs a tumbler of liquor, and then brews himself a cocktail of household chemicals and swallows that. He is found floating face down in his family's pool.

As many critics have discovered, it's often hard to keep the solipsistic airhead act that Gregg Araki puts on when he presents his films in public separate from rational appraisal of the films themselves. But the effort has to be made, not least because the films are in some ways getting better. *Totally F***ed Up* (the title is not written but spoken by Andy in the opening moments) announces itself as "another homo movie by Gregg Araki", but it's



Kids in America: 'Totally F***ed Up'

actually quite different in stance, style and structure from *The Living End*, Araki's first agit-queer movie. In some ways it revisits the manic, depressed LA soulscapes of his first two features, *Three Bewildered People in the Night* (1987) and *The Long Weekend (o'Despair)* (1989); however the protagonists this time are not failed performance and video artists but relatively cheerful and resilient kids in their late teens. And this time the film is framed as an explicit homage to Godard.

For *Masculin Féminin*'s "15 Precise Acts", Araki substitutes "15 random celluloid fragments". Each chapter is a mini collage: Araki's observational and storytelling footage is intercut with video material supposedly from Steven's documentary, and the whole is interspersed with Araki's attempts at sardonic, Godardian captions. The first 6½ chapters are organised around themes such as sex and dope, and designed to establish the characters, their preoccupations and problems; the caption "START NARRATIVE HERE" midway through chapter 7 heralds the somewhat half-hearted shift to storytelling mode and the subsequent chronicling of Andy's heartbreak, Deric's split from Steven and Tommy's expulsion from his family home. Very little of this is authentically "random" except for the Godardian composition of shots (there's a lot of tight framing that makes very inept reference to offscreen space) and the role of the lesbian couple Michele and Patricia. The girls are all too clearly present for PC reasons of balance and solidarity, but the only problems Araki can think of giving them are those of shopping and prospective lesbian parenting; most of the time they are there only as confidantes for the screwed-up boys.

As the film goes on, its purported randomness looks more and more like a cop-out, a mask for an underlying (and decidedly un-Godardian) sentimentality. Aside from a couple of anecdotal references to homophobia on TV and in the press, nothing here addresses the sociological questions raised by the newspaper clipping on which the film opens. Showing Tommy

(apparently the only working-class kid in the group) being thrown out by his parents and having Deric being beaten up (off screen) by queer-bashers does not amount to an analysis of society's homophobia. Leaving all the parents off screen is not an adequate answer to the obvious questions about the presence or absence of parental support. And showing Andy's suicide does nothing to explain why more gay kids than straight kids kill themselves. Andy drinks Drano on impulse and drowns in the family swimming pool because he gave his anal virginity to a guy who subsequently two-timed him and because he couldn't get any of his friends on the phone when he needed to; sad, but not much sadder than spending a late adolescence holed up in your room with your Jesus and Mary Chain records, a habit by no means exclusive to gay teenagers. Araki, himself no spring chicken himself at the age of 35, may pride himself on getting so close to emotionally inarticulate teenagers, but he ought to be experienced enough to know that empathy alone gets you nowhere.

And yet the film has cherishable qualities. Its observation of the gay, teen and gay-teen subcultures in LA is spot on: a bootleg tape of Nine Inch Nails in concert used as an aid to seduction, an Aids patient begging on the sidewalk, a relationship forged in the toilet of a theatre screening *My Beautiful Laundrette*, lousy re-run tapes on the phone-sex lines. It's both admirable and believable that no-one inside or outside the core group ever draws attention to the group's variegated racial mix. The sex scenes involving Andy – particularly his seduction by Ian in chapter 8, but also his failure to agree on a mutually pleasurable act with a casual pick-up in chapter 2 – are models of 1990s safe-sex realism. Best of all is the casting: all six principals are new to movies, but Araki makes up for the shortcomings of his scripting by guiding them into performances of great naturalness and charm. All of which suggests that Araki may yet make a terrific film. Maybe next time.

Tony Rayns

Welcome II the Terrordome

United Kingdom 1994

Director: Ngozi Onwurah

Certificate

18

Distributor

Metro Tartan

Production Company

Non-Aligned

Communications

In association with Channel 4 Television U.K. Metro Tartan

Producer

Simon Onwurah

Co-producer

Valentine Nonyela

Dingi Ntuli

Gillian Hazel

Line Producer

Joel Phiri

Production Co-ordinators

Yvonne Ibazebo

Stella Nwimo

Production Manager

Sarah Carr

Post-production Consultant

Louis Ellman

2nd Unit Director

Danny Williamson

Assistant Directors

Christos Georgiou

Orson Nava

Tony Hopkins

Jake Nava

Gavin Alexander

Joanna Gonzoni

Chinyere Ukario

Screenplay

Ngozi Onwurah

Continuity

Sarah Lane

Amanda Mears

Louise Shellard

Director of Photography

Alwin H. Kuchler

2nd Unit Camera Operators

Steven Gray

Pentti Keskimäki

Roman Osin

Ian Watts

Editor

Liz Webber

Production Designers

Lindi Pankiv

Miraphora Mina

Art Directors

Tricia Stephenson

Emma Fowler

Special Effects

David Harris

Darren May

Costume Design

Claire Ditchburn

Sarah Wiltshire

Fennella Magnus

Make-up

Alex King

Lindsay Swift

Titles/Opticals

Film Optics

Music

John Murphy

David A. Hughes

Black Radical MkII

Music Adviser

Cliff Norman

Songs/Music Extracts

"Welcome To My Home",

"Flag Another One Down",

"This is the Future",

"Tribal War" by Felix

Joseph, performed by Black

Radical MkII; "Black and

White" by Valentine

Nonyela, Felix Joseph, John

Murphy, David Hughes,

performed by Valentine

Nonyela; "It's Just the

Same" by Mimi Kobayashi,

Tony Nwachukwu

performed by Moves

in Motion; "Ghetto

Tension" by Felix Joseph,

performed by Catherine

Coffey, Black Radical MkII;

"Ibo Rising" by John

Murphy, David Hughes,

Felix Joseph, Ngozi

Onwurah, performed by

Sense of Sound; "Follow

the Drum" by John

Murphy, David Hughes,

Ngozi Onwurah,

performed by Sense of

Sound; "Underwater" by

Felix Joseph, performed by

Black Radical Mk II, Cath

Coffey; "Kickin' Funk" by

Tony Nwachukwu,

performed by The Ibo 1; "If

Only..." by and performed

by Stan Martin; "Jealousy"

by Felix Joseph, John

Murphy, David Hughes,

performed by Black

Radical Mk II & DJ

Cell; "Life Ain't Always in

Dreams" by Mimi

Kobayashi, Tony

Nwachukwu, performed by

Moves in Motion featuring

Alison Evelyn

Sound Design

Colin Richie

Alan Spelling

Dubbing Editor

Colin Richie

Dubbing Mixer

Alan Spelling

ADR Editor

Victor Nunes

Sound Recordists

Richard Flynn

Richard Bleasdale

Paul Davis

Anna Aliota

Cast

Suzette Llewellyn

Angela McBride/African

Woman #1

Saffron Burrows

Jodie

Felix Joseph

Black Rad/African Leader

Valentine Nonyela

Spike/African Man #1

Ben Wynter

Hector/African Boy

Stan Martin

Chriselle/African Woman

#2

Jason Traynor

Jason/Asst. Overseer

Brian Boveil

Officer Boveil/Slave Hand

Cynthia Powell

Rosa Parkson

Natasha Romulus

Tasha/African Girl

Marica Myrie

Nadine Parkson

Olu Taiwo

Red Gang Leader/African

Man #2

Charlotte Moore

Officer Mag/Mistress Ma

Tom Geoghean

Aryan Prisoner

Catherine Coffey

Soul Sister

Roderick O'Grady

Drugs Dealer/Slave Master

Ewan McNaughton

Jasper/Overseer

John Adelewe

Branded Slave

Orson Nava

Officer George/Slave Hand

Mzee Coffey

Red Gang Member/African

Man #3

Tim Potting

Blue Gang Member/

African Man #4

Daryl Crook

Dominic Wallace

Prison Guards

Dingi Ntuli

Mad Man

Mark Simmons

Newsreader

Pat Phillips

Tyre-Burning Victim

Lucien Campbell

Kwame Asabere

Davina Spencer

Ibo Extras

8,468 feet

94 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Eastman

Prints by

Technicolor

North Carolina, 1652. An African family stands on a beach being inspected by their captors. After one of their number is branded and humiliated, he instructs the others to escape slavery by walking out to sea, still in chains and presumably to their death.

The same faces turn up in *Terrordome*, a city ghetto of the near future. Only blacks appear to live in *Terrordome*, and its main economy is drug dealing, with two rival gangs fighting for business. Relatives Black Rad and Spike lead one of the gangs. Spike has a white girlfriend, Jodie, who is pregnant. Black Rad's wife Angela struggles to shield their children from *Terrordome*'s dirty realities, but already their young son Hector is keen to get out of the home and follow his father.

Black Rad and Spike meet up with a group of white buyers, among them Jodie's ex-lover Jason, who determines to take revenge on her. Later, at a club, the adults that dance are unaware young Hector and his friends are playing in a nearby derelict room. Working in tandem with the police, Jason and his white motorcycle gang arrive at the club. The police raid the club and make arrests. Jodie is allowed to escape and runs into the trap set by Jason and his gang. Jason assaults Jodie, kicking her in the stomach until she begins to bleed. Hector attempts to escape, but falls from a height and dies.

Angela discovers Hector's dead body. Jason, looking on, mocks. She shoots him and continues, until overpowered, to shoot all the white gang members and police who cross her path. Jodie, back in the family home, is still bleeding when the prison phones Angela's mother. Learning that her grandson is dead and her daughter imprisoned, Angela's mother can no longer find it in her to help Jodie, now just another white woman.

In prison after the raid, Black Rad and his rival gang leader outwit a warden and escape. Free, they resolve on a new policy of co-operation. The gangs meet, and Black Rad has to be dissuaded from killing Spike, blaming his relationship with Jodie for his son's death. Jodie eventually miscarries. Angela is led to her execution. The gangs take over a TV channel, announcing their manifesto. The opening scene is reprised: those who walked into the sea have made it to Africa, where they shake off their chains, as does a reborn Angela on the streets of *Terrordome*.

Welcome II the Terrordome takes its name and, according to its makers, its inspiration from a track by rap act Public Enemy, whose logo appears in the film. The connection signals a shared standpoint – in terms of subject matter, this means determining social wrongs and targeting them; in method, it means speed and shock.

Familiarity with hip-hop's shock aesthetic might help place the film in context, but it's hardly enough to persuade that Ngozi Onwurah's debut feature is a good film. You can appreciate the wish to transpose into film

terms the rhetoric of a music which, at best, simplifies as a powerful cartoon or a political pamphlet might do; the script still comes across as inelegant and leadenly didactic. The impact of the simplify-and-shock approach is most problematic in the film's stark black/white essentialism. This is not predominantly a question of portraying whites negatively and blacks positively, although it's true that illustrations of how putrid the whites are sometimes seem unrelieved. The female warden who phones Angela's mother, laughing at the news she has to tell before spitting in Angela's face, is just the grossest of a collection of caricatures; but neither are there many angels among the blacks. The problem is more that colour is almost without fail the film's principal definer and divider – whites are one thing, blacks another.

The editing, however, seeks to blur the divide and give a more complex picture. The righteous anger of the black gangs alternates with images of the suffering Jodie. Onwurah here suggests that when strength is drawn from simplistic general divisions, then individual suffering is dismissed: Angela has lost a child, the catalyst for the gang's action, but that will not prevent another loss, that of Jodie's baby. Still, this bid for complexity is almost overwhelmed by the rhetorical devices Onwurah assembles as the film reaches its climax. The soundtrack becomes increasingly busy, with extracts from civil rights speeches joining the music, and footage of a troupe of men – otherwise not featured in the narrative – silently drilling themselves for battle, recurs like a sampled musical motif. Onwurah wants to recreate the vertiginous swirl of hip-hop, but the result tends to crude exhortation.

The film's sense of place is shaky. Again, the ambition was an interesting one – to produce a hi-tech/lo-tech fusion, a first world shanty town. But the mix of present-day Americana (talk of the President, the US police cars) and the pieces of lumpen Britain (especially Jason's bike gang) barely cohere. And yet, despite the flaws, there are powerful scenes to admire. Hector running to his death and Jodie's battering, where direction, photography and music skilfully conspire. There is also a lovely moment of lightness when Hector plays at being a star and sings a favourite Public Enemy song. Generally, music is used well, the device of a sympathetic radio station and DJ commenting on the action, allowing some songs to work in the manner of a hip-hop Greek chorus.

Still, although in many ways a one-off, *Terrordome* labours under the same central flaw of other films from young Britons over the last year or so – *The Young Americans* and *Shopping* come immediately to mind. Like them *Welcome II the Terrordome* is poorly written and carelessly plotted. It's hard to take any sentiment or action seriously when it moves in such lumbering cliché.

Robert Yates

BRITISH INDEPENDENTS

Boy Meets Girl

United Kingdom 1994

Director: Ray Brady

Certificate

Not yet issued

Distributor

Kino Eye Video

Productions

Production Company

Kino Eye

Producers

Ray Brady

Chris Read

Line Producer

Ray Tang

Assistant Director

Minou Norouzi

Casting

Kino Eye

Screenplay

Jim Crosbie

Ray Brady

Based on an original

idea by Ray Brady

Director of Photography

Kevin McMorrow

Video Camera Operator

Tom Theakstone

Editor

Russell Fenton

Off-line Video Editor

Ray Brady

Tom Theakstone

On-line Video Editors

Magic

Jeremy Adair

Simon Hughes

John Chamberlain

Production Designer

Ray Brady

Costume Design

Pam Hogg

Make-up

Tamsin Dorling

Special Make-up Effects

Sumil Chandragiri

Titles/Opticals

Dave Barnard

Music

Jim Crosbie

Geoff Southall

Additional Music

"Sister" by Desmond

Brady; "The Hunter"

by Pam Hogg

Music Performed by

Jim Crosbie

Geoff Southall

Ian Dickson

Michael Popowitch

John Reynolds

Sound Consultants

Giancarlo Delapina

Ciaran Harte

Jeff Willis

Sound Recordist

"Alan Smithie"

(Jim Crosbie)

Video Dubbing Mixer

Johnathon Moore

Film Dubbing Mixer

John Salcini

Cast

Tim Poole

Tevin

Danielle Sanderson

Julia

Margot Steinberg

Anne-Marie

Susan Warren

Female Victim in Chair

Nathalie Khanna

Tevin's Wife

Myuki Smith Khanna

Pierre Smith Khanna

Tevin's Children

Georgina Whitbourne

Female Victim

on Monitor

Robert Haynes

Branded Man

John Reid

Hanging Man

Ray Brady

Laughing Man

Chris Read

Whipped Man

Pam Hogg

Woman in Bar

Patrick Lelarge

Sam Taylor-Woods

Tom Theakstone

Tamsin Dorling

Minou Norouzi

Sumil Chandragiri

Dingi Ntuli

Paul Mashaimanai

People in Bar

8,370 feet

93 minutes

In colour

then strangles him. The film ends with montage of her future victims, male and female.

The film the BBFC refused to give a certificate to is prefaced with a quotation from Nietzsche, designed surely to add weight to the argument of its director that it is a philosophical exploitation film rather than a catalogue of violent events. In fact the film can be read as a Sadean fable with a hint of Nietzsche – a woman who takes responsibility for the way she is (a sadist) enacts her mode of being upon a man who refuses to take responsibility for the way he is (a cheating husband, a violent attacker).

Boy Meets Girl, according to Brady, sets out to work against the conventions of the Hollywood movie. One such convention is evidently a normative morality of good versus bad. Julia's sole pleasure is to give pain to others. There is no apology for this and little explanatory psychology, although her brief recollection of an obsessive, alienated childhood verges on this. While she and Anne-Marie profess to "punish" Tevin for his crimes, Julia, in particular, is hardly an avenging feminist. Her own victims, including the beheaded Anne-Marie, are both male and female.

Nor, despite its gender-reversed overtones of Sade's *Justine*, is the film a study of sadism. There are potentially pivotal moments in which Julia's calm composure cracks, when she rages against Tevin or, finally, when she grows tender towards him as she kills him. But for the most part she remains fixed and exotically distant in the manner of Hannibal Lecter, a figure of the Hollywood the film purports to work against. In rather the same way, Tevin is also fixed. Whether raging misogynistically or trying to make a rational argument, he is taunted with Julia's cold logic and tortured further.

That is another Hollywood convention dismissed. We are not given a chance to care about the characters. As viewers, we too are fixed, watching a repetitive cycle of torture and discussion. If this is not cinema of entertainment, it seems to be purely didactic. Are we supposed to become desensitised by the procession of torture? Are we supposed to respond to the array of subjects briefly raised: women's roles (can women be as aggressive as men?); fascism (is Julia's behaviour comparable with Hitler's, as Tevin suggests?); ethical nihilism (cheating on your wife); and TV violence (its unreality and the viewer's desensitisation)?

As a meditation on violence, *Boy Meets Girl* imposes a distance between itself and its viewer that poses interesting questions but is also confusing. That confusion is, perhaps, the result of a viewer's expectations of something else. After all, Julia herself says that there is the capacity for untold violence within us all. The fact that the film never allows that most important connection to take place emotionally between it and us makes it unsatisfying and sometimes irritating viewing.

Amanda Lipman

Mark Kermode and Peter Dean highlight their ten video choices of the month, and overleaf review, respectively, the rest of the rental and retail releases

VIDEO CHOICE



Smack up: Harvey Keitel in 'Bad Lieutenant'

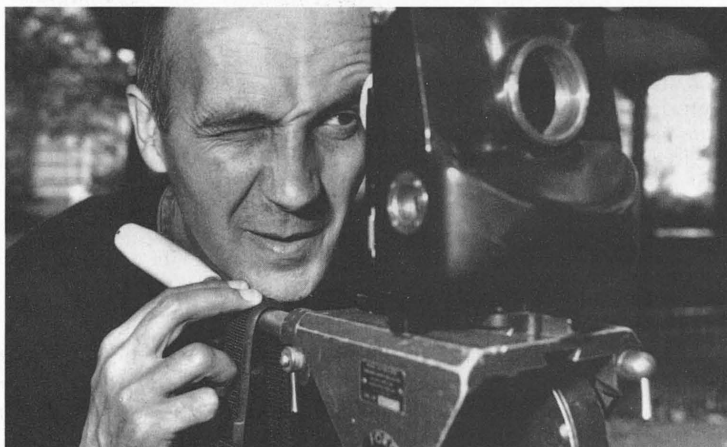
Bad Lieutenant

Director Abel Ferrara/USA 1992

Ferrara's gritty tale of an amoral policeman's violent redemption is among the first 'problem' films to be certificated for video since the enforcement of the Criminal Justice Act's controversial amendment to the Video Recordings Act. The amendment states that; "The designated authority [the BBFC] shall, in making any determination as to the suitability of a video work, have special regard (among other relevant factors) to any harm that may be caused to potential viewers, or, through their behaviour, to society, in the manner which the work deals with a) criminal behaviour b) illegal drugs c) violent behaviour or incidents d) horrific behaviour or incidents, or e) human sexual activity." In light of this directive, the BBFC have cut one minute and 40 seconds from the UK theatrical print (which was itself uncut from the US NC 17 rated print). The first major cuts occur during the rape of the nun, at

approximately 17 minutes. In an attempt to reduce the "erotic elements" of this sequence, the BBFC have cut a shot of the nun's pubic hair as the rapists pull her her knickers down, and a close shot of a rapist's buttocks as he thrusts into her. Most of the cuts, however, occur during the scene in which Harvey Keitel and Zoe Lund are seen shooting up heroin, at approximately 63 minutes. Believing that this scene was "instructional" in the use of drugs, the BBFC have excised footage depicting the "process of drug injection." (Apparently, the distributor Guild rejected a suggestion to reframe the sequence focusing on Keitel's face, opting instead for dissolve cut.) The tape also features the BBFC's newly devised "Consumer Advice Grid" which defines the film's contents as: "Theme/Contents - police corruption, drugs, religion; Bad Language - very frequent, coarse; Sex, Nudity - occasional strong; Violence - occasional strong, sexual assault." (S&S February 1993)

● Rental: Guild G8702; Certificate 18



A capital eye: Patrick Keiller, director of 'London'

London

Director Patrick Keiller/UK 1994

Keiller's witty essay about contemporary London is a brave left-field project which neatly draws on such diverse references as the picaresque novel, documentary-makers, such as Humphrey Jennings and Chris Marker and the early films of Peter Greenaway (in particular *The Falls*). The omniscient narrator (Paul Scofield) and his unseen travelling companion Robinson walk across London, while commentating obliquely on scenes of historical and topical

interest. The splendour of the city's history, monuments and ceremonies is set against a video diary of events in 1992 which include the miner's march, the IRA bombing campaign, Lloyds' crash and the fall from grace of the royals. The film digs beneath the surface of a city which seems at times to be non-existent - an anti-social, reactionary and lonely place, "full of interesting people who want to be elsewhere." A fascinating work which highlights a metropolis in decline. (S&S June 1994)

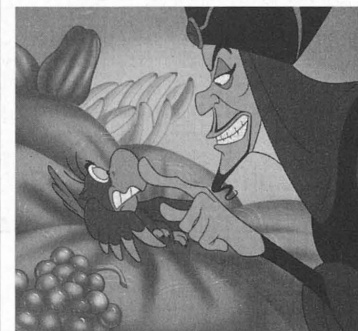
● Retail: Academy CAV 021; Price £15.99; Certificate U

The Return of Jafar

Directors Toby Shelton/Alan Zaslove/USA 1994

Although this sequel to *Aladdin* sorely misses Robin Williams' voice, the fine animation and catchy songs are on a par. Gilbert Gottfried steals the limelight as Iago the parrot whose master Jafar escapes from the magic lamp in which he is imprisoned. It's unusual for a sequel to be made for the straight-to-video market (an exception is Universal's *The Valley Before Time*, the follow up to *The Land Before Time*), but apparently, Disney is considering this marketing technique on several other of its big animation hits, including *The Lion King*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Little Mermaid*.

● Retail Premiere: Walt Disney D222372; Price £14.99; 66 minutes; Certificate U; Producers Tad Stones, Alan Zaslove; Screenplay Kevin Campbell, Mirth Is Colao, Bill Motz, Steve Roberts, Dev Ross, Bob Roth, Ian Strand, Brian Swenlin; Lead Actors Liz Calloway, Gilbert Gottfried, Brad Kane



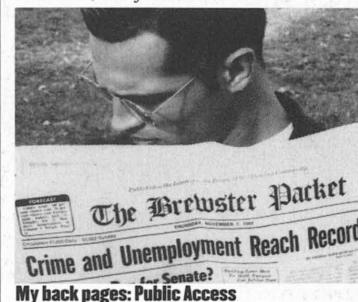
Aladdin II: 'The Return of Jafar'

Public Access

Director Bryan Singer/USA/Japan 1993

In the idyllic American backwater of Brewster, a cable TV show hosted by new arrival Wiley Pritchler (Ron Marquette) stirs up a hornet's nest of neighbourhood in-fighting and political intrigue. Taking inspiration from David Lynch, Singer's low-budget independent movie is an endearing oddity which veers between satire and nastiness. Jeff Goldblum lookalike Ron Marquette is perfectly cast as enigmatic Pritchler whose smooth talking and oily persona covers up a demented devotion to the legend of the American small town. An intriguing (if somewhat unoriginal) work.

● Rental: Image IMAG 506; Certificate 18; 90 minutes; Producer Kenneth Kokin; Screenplay Christopher McQuarrie, Bryan Singer, Michael Feit Dougan; Lead Actors Ron Marquette, Dina Brooks, Burt Williams, Larry Maxwell



Darkness in Tallinn (Tallinn pimeduses)

Director Ilkka Järvelähti/Finland/USA/Sweden/Estonia 1993

This startling Eastern European heist movie contains an outlandish melodramatic subplot. On the eve of newly independent Estonia receiving a delivery of gold deposits, a group of Russian gangsters plan a robbery with the help of an electrician, Toivio (Ivo Uukkivi), whose job it is to black out the city. But his actions put his new-born

baby (who is in an incubator) and his sick wife in jeopardy. Rein Kotov's grainy black and white photography is exceptional, with carefully composed images of haggard people against stark backgrounds. A tricky twist has the film burst into colour when Toivio takes control of his life. Though the metaphor about the damaging effects of crime on a young nation is badly handled, *Darkness in Tallinn*'s sheer nerve wins out. (S&S October 1994)

● Retail: Tartan Video TVT 1196; Price £15.99; Subtitles: B/W and Colour; Certificate 18



Baltic blues: 'Darkness in Tallinn'

The Puppetmaster (Hsimeng Rensheng)

Director Hou Hsiao-Hsien (Hou Xiaoxian)/Taiwan 1993

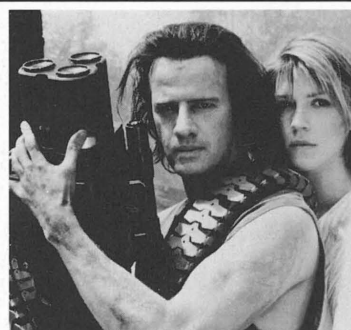
The second part of Hou Hsiao-Hsien's projected trilogy examines the effect of the Japanese occupation on Taiwanese life from 1910 until the end of the Second World War. Puppeteer and Hou regular Li Tianlu narrates his life story and appears as himself in the film. Hou's detached style of direction is best seen in a series of static tableaux, which allows the *mise en scène* a life of its own. The

camera remains a stationary observer as the actors walk in and out of scenes. Considering the oppression the Taiwanese suffered at the hands of the Japanese, the film shows surprisingly little anger or condemnation. The puppet scenes in which apprentice Li works in a travelling open air show, require a much larger screen as it's difficult to see what is happening at times. However, the quality of the print transfer does justice to the director's beautifully composed scenes. (S&S June 1994)

● Retail: Electric Pictures EP 0065; Price £15.99; Subtitles: Widescreen; Certificate 15



Life on a string: 'The Puppetmaster'



On the button: 'Fortress'

Fortress

Director Stuart Gordon/USA/Australia 1992

There's something about big, sweaty guys locked up in a hi-tech prison that firmly jabs the testosterone button. Long-time horror director Stuart Gordon, along with his design team and cast of inmates – from pin-up Christopher Lambert to shaven-headed thug Tom Towles and long-haired techno-freak Jeffrey Combs – understands the appeal. The plot, which centres on Lambert and his spouse being imprisoned for procreating, plagiarises films from *The Handmaid's Tale* to *Chained Heat*, and is little more than an excuse to show off Lambert. He demonstrates about as much dramatic range as a stylophone, but thankfully all he has to do is suffer and look mean. Nice gadgets, senseless violence and ludicrous gore complete the package. (S&S August 1994)

● Retail: Columbia TriStar CVT 14362; Certificate 18



Beastly heatitudes: 'Faust'

Faust

Director Jan Svankmajer/Czech Republic/France 1994

Goethe's *Faust* is ideal material for Svankmajer. In his first full-length feature the director mixes claymation, live action, puppets and stop-frame effects in a similar manner to his earlier film *Alice*. Faust (Peter Cepek), a Kafkaesque clerk living in contemporary Prague, is guided by a map – and his destiny – through a nightmarish labyrinth of passageways and cellars to a laboratory. Once there, he summons up Mephisto and makes a pact with the devil to live 24 years in bliss in return for his soul. The first section, lacking the literary references which might have been an obstacle for those unschooled in Marlowe and Goethe, is the most satisfactory. Svankmajer's craft and sense of logic are best witnessed when Faust follows his 'white rabbit', but the scenes featuring a Punch figure seem interminable. (S&S October 1994)

● Retail: ICA Projects ICAV 1014; Price £13.99; Certificate PG

Killing Machine

Director Damien Lee/Canada 1994

Further evidence that Jeff Wincott is the thinking fan's muscle-man. This low-key release confounds the view that the martial-arts/action genre is the last bastion of macho prejudice. Brought back from the dead by a sinister government agency, Wincott is dispatched to commit a series of political murders which, he is assured, will secure the safety of the nation. Instead, he is used to destroy evidence that the Aids virus was created in government labs. Wincott performs the action scenes with ease, while Mitchell and Lee's screenplay is part sci-fi fantasy, part radical political rant. An unexpected, enjoyable treat.

● Rental: FoxVideo 3648; Certificate 18; 93 minutes; Producer Damien Lee; Screenplay David Mitchell, Damien Lee; Lead Actors Jeff Wincott, Terri Hawkes, David Bolt, Michael Ironside

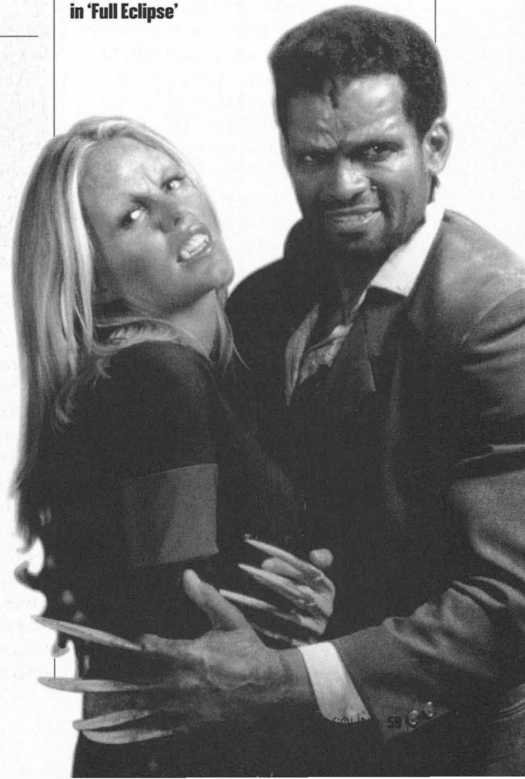
Full Eclipse

Director Anthony Hickox/USA 1994

After earning a reputation in the 80s as one of the horror genre's most turgid film-makers, Hickox has recently experienced an exciting revival. In *Ticks* he demonstrated a hitherto unseen flair for grisly comic thrills. He cements his position as a purveyor of high-gloss schlock in this werewolf/vampire hybrid. This inventive story, co-written by talented Richard Christian Matheson, is about a group of vigilante cops who wage a covert war against crime, aided by a mysterious serum which gives them feral agility and renders them indestructible. Mario Van Peebles is surprisingly able as the beleaguered innocent lured into their deadly plan, while Patsy Kensit pouts as his vulpine temptress. Daft but pleasurable.

● Rental: 20.20 Vision NVT 22937; Certificate 18; 93 minutes; Producers Peter Abrams, Robert Levy; Screenplay Richard Christian Matheson, Michael Reaves; Lead Actors Mario Van Peebles, Patsy Kensit, Bruce Payne

Grisly thrills: Kensit and Van Peebles in 'Full Eclipse'



Reviews in *Monthly Film Bulletin* and *Sight and Sound* are cited in parentheses. A retail video that has previously been reviewed in the rental section will be listed only and the film review reference given. The term 'Premiere' refers to a film that has had no prior UK theatrical release and is debuting on video. □ denotes closed captioning facility

Rental

The Beverly Hillbillies

Director Penelope Spheeris; USA 1993; FoxVideo 8561; Certificate PG
Spheeris fails to show the satirical comic flair of her earlier work (*Wayne's World*, *The Decline of Western Civilization*) in this limp, big-budget adaptation of the classic television series. A family of country bumpkins move to Beverly Hills after discovering oil on their land. (S&S August 1994) □

Fixing the Shadow

Director Larry Ferguson; USA 1992; 20.20 Vision NVT 14909; Certificate 18
Dreary Charlie Sheen makes a preposterous ass of himself in this movie, which was presumably saved from going straight-to-video by the recent rise of co-stars Michael Madsen (*Reservoir Dogs*) and Linda Fiorentino (*The Last Seduction*). After being fired from his job, loose-cannon cop Dan Saxon (Sheen) is recruited by the FBI to go undercover among a biker gang lead by the psychotic Blood (Madsen). (S&S August 1994)

The Getaway

Director Roger Donaldson; USA 1994; Warner V013316; Certificate 18
An unnecessary remake of Sam Peckinpah's classic. In the face of such an impossible task, director Donaldson and scriptwriter Walter Hill (who also wrote Peckinpah's version) remain cautiously close to the original. Kim Basinger and Alec Baldwin have none of the gritty charm of Steve McQueen and Ali McGraw. (S&S July 994)

Hostile Hostages

Director Ted Demme; USA 1994; Buena Vista D327482; Certificate 15
Released in the States as *The Ref*, this enjoyed a very low-key theatrical outing in the UK before resurfacing on video where it is something of a treat - witty, wicked and just a little bit wise. A hapless burglar (finely played by wise-cracking cynic Denis Leary) breaks into a middle-class Connecticut home on Christmas Eve and is forced to suffer the indignities of family in-fighting. (S&S July 1994) □

Look Who's Talking Now

Director Tom Ropelewski; USA 1993; 20.20 Vision NVT 20763; Certificate 12
The third instalment in the series introduces a couple of talking dogs into the Ubriacco family for more down-market, money-spinning laughs. Danny DeVito and Diane Keaton go belly up for the dollars and provide the doggy dialogue, and John Travolta is saccharine sweet. (S&S June 1994) □

Maverick

Director Richard Donner; USA 1994; Warner V012750; Certificate PG
One of the finer offerings from the recent spate of big-screen television adaptations,

Richard Donner's Western benefits from a winning central performance by Mel Gibson, strong support from a glamorous but under-used Jodie Foster and an avuncular James Garner (star of the original series). Enjoyable, forgettable fare. (S&S August 1994)

My Father, the Hero

Director Steve Miner; USA 1994; Buena Vista D341242; Certificate PG
A teenage girl (Katherine Heigl), on holiday in the Caribbean, pretends to her fellow holiday-makers that her father is her abusive lover (Gérard Depardieu). Director Miner's Hollywood remake of *Mon père, ce héros* comes across in English as embarrassingly tasteless and misjudged. (S&S May 1994) □

Renaissance Man

Director Penny Marshall; USA 1994; Guild G8772; Certificate 12
A career low-point for Penny Marshall and star Danny DeVito. A middle-aged man, unexpectedly made redundant, is sent by an employment agency to train educationally-challenged army recruits. Horrible moments of bonding follow as DeVito teaches the grunts about Shakespeare and poetry, and they initiate him into the wonders of rap music. (S&S August 1994)

Rental premiere

Blue Tiger

Director Norberto Barba; USA 1994; Medusa MC 411; Certificate 18; Producers Michael Leahy, Aki Kominé; Screenplay Joel Soisson; Lead Actors Virginia Madsen, Toru Nakamura, Ryo Ishibashi, Harry Dean Stanton
An enjoyably nihilistic action thriller from the makers of the surprise hit *American Yakuza*. A grieving mother (Virginia Madsen, excellent) swears revenge after her child is accidentally killed during a Yakuza gun battle. With only a brief glimpse of the killer's tattoo as a clue, Madsen gets some matching body art and goes undercover. Handsome photography, slick direction and a fun script make this a top quality B-movie.

Codename: Assassin

Director Lorenzo Lamas; USA 1993; Hi Fliers HFV 8277; Certificate 18; 88 minutes; Producers Richard Pepin, Joseph Merhi; Screenplay Michael Januray; Lead Actors Lorenzo Lamas, Kathleen Kinmont, John Savage
Formulaic action fodder which plagiarises from the Bridget Fonda hit *The Assassin*. Former terrorist Alexa is blackmailed into working for a shady American government organisation to retrieve a missing weapon. Dull characters, and no surprises.

Harmful Intent

Director John Patterson; USA 1993; Odyssey ODY 416; Certificate 15; 90 minutes; Producer Daniel Schneider; Screenplay Martha Weingartner; Lead Actors Tim Matheson, Emma Samms, Robert Pastorelli, Alex Rocco
Unremarkable made-for-TV medical thriller from the screenwriter of *Coma* and *Vital Signs*, which shamelessly steals from Michael Crichton's definitive work. A doctor (Tim Matheson) with a secret morphine addiction, is charged with murder when one of his patients dies on the operating table. While attempting to

clear his name, he uncovers a murderous plot by a group of lawyers. Passable.

Men of War

Director Andrew Pfeffer; Luxembourg/Thailand 1994; EVV 1296; Certificate 18; 99 minutes; Producers Arthur Goldblatt, Andrew Pfeffer; Screenplay John Sayles, Ethan Reiff, Cyrus Voris
Lead Actors Dolph Lundgren, Charlotte Lewis, B.D. Wong, Anthony John Denison, Trevor Goddard
Mercenary Nick Riley (Lundgren) is sent to cajole the people of a South Pacific island into signing over their country's mineral rights to a multi-national corporation. Enraptured by the natural beauty of the tropical paradise, Nick is torn between loyalty to his profession and his new-found feelings of kinship. Although traces of John Sayles' hand remain in the script, this generic hybrid suffers from extensive rewrites. The result is messy and confusing, torn between an action thriller and a low-key drama.

Night Caller

Director Fred Williamson; USA 1993; Hi Fliers 8280; Certificate 18; 88 minutes; Producer Fred Williamson; Screenplay Michael Montgomery, Fred Williamson; Lead Actors Gary Bussey, Peter Fonda, Fred Williamson
An inept thriller, lacking style or grace, and featuring repulsive scenes of sexual violence. A private detective goes to the rescue of his ex-wife, a telephone sex operator, who is being harassed by a caller. A portly Gary Bussey pops up to provide comic relief, but Williamson dominates the proceedings both behind and in front of the camera.

One Wedding and Lots of Funerals

Director Rodman Flender; USA 1994; Medusa MC 421; Certificate 18; 82 minutes; Producer Donald P. Borchers; Screenplay Turi Meyer, Al Septein; Lead Actors Warwick Davis, Shevonne Durkin
The topical retitling of *Leprechaun II* is the funniest thing in this otherwise predictable horror/comedy. Robbed of his wedding night for thousands of years, a murderous Irish elf arrives in latter day New York to claim a young beauty. Willow star Warwick Davis romps through the ghoulish japes with pizzazz and, although his Irish accent is unconvincing, gives the monster a certain charm. A shame the rest of the movie is made up of cheap jokes and gore.

Savate

Director Isaac Florentine; USA 1994; New Age NA 005; Certificate 18; 90 minutes; Producer Alan Merhrez; Screenplay Isaac Florentine, Julian Stone; Lead Actors Olivier Gruner, James Brolin, Marc Singer,



Beggars' belief: Miracle in Milan

Ian Ziering, Michael Palanca
Martial arts hero Olivier Gruner journeys West for kick-boxing adventures. Nineteenth-century French cowboy Joseph Charlemont uses the martial art of savate to triumph over a corrupt Texan landowner. Not a patch on Gruner's more rewarding sci-fi work.

When the Bough Breaks

Director Michael Cohn; USA 1993; Columbia TriStar MC 420; Certificate 18; 98 minutes; Producers Barbara Javitz, Denise Ballew; Screenplay Michael Cohn; Lead Actors Ally Walker, Martin Sheen, Ron Perlman
A bizarre derivative of *Silence of the Lambs* and *The Exorcist III*. A special investigator (Ally Walker, with accent, hair and clothes stolen from Jodie Foster's Clarice Starling) interviews a psychiatric patient in order to halt a series of bizarre child mutilations. The central premise of having the male patient played by an actress fails miserably, although her evocation of childish distress is occasionally disturbing.

Retail

Bhai on the Beach

Director Gurinder Chadha; UK 1993; Channel Four Films VA 30411; Price £12.99; Certificate 15
(S&S February 1994)

Body Melt

Director Philip Brophy; Australia 1993; First Independent VA 30340; Price £12.99; Certificate 18
(S&S Video April 1994)

City of Women (La Città delle donne)

Director Federico Fellini; Italy/France 1980; Artificial Eye ART 103; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15
Unfairly criticised for its supposedly sexist views, this exposition of Fellini's fears and fantasies about women (with Marcello Mastroianni once again playing the director's alter ego) is one of his last great films. The director uses his familiar structure of fantasy interrupted reality, with a middle-aged businessman dreaming on a train, and later trying to escape from a hotel where a feminist convention is taking place. A textbook study for the psychoanalytical reading of cinema. (MFB No. 572)

Equinox

Director Alan Rudolph; USA 1992; Tartan Video TVT 1175; Price £15.99; Certificate 15
(S&S July 1993)

The Good Father

Director Mike Newell; UK 1986; Channel Four Films VA 30412; Price £12.99; Certificate 15
Arguably Newell's best film, with an outstanding performance by Anthony Hopkins as a bitter man who gets revenge by proxy on his estranged wife. Jim Broadbent and Simon Callow are fine in strong supporting roles, but Hopkins carries the film, managing to elicit sympathy for a difficult, unloveable man. (MFB No. 633)

The House of the Spirits

Director Bille August; Germany/Denmark/Portugal 1993; Entertainment in Video EVS 1151; Price £10.99; Certificate 15
(S&S April 1994)

PRIVATE VIEW

Lizzie Borden on Scorsese's 'Raging Bull'

Blood and redemption

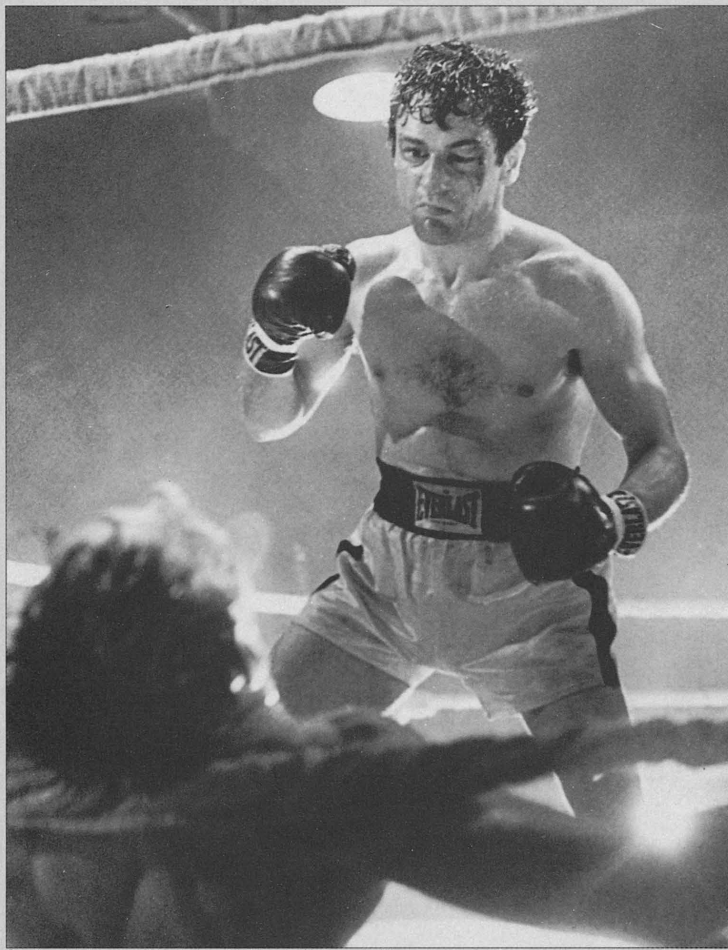
Vicki: "Nice car."
 Jake: "Like my car?"
 (Long silence).
 Jake: "Where ya from?"
 Vicki: "Round here."
 (Long silence).
 Jake: "Wanna go for a ride?"
 (Silence).
 Vicki: "All right."

Stark, beautiful and shot in black and white, Martin Scorsese's *Raging Bull* is now regarded by many as the greatest film of the 80s. Yet when it was released in 1980 it was criticised for being about a totally unsympathetic character: the boxer Jake La Motta, a brutal and violent man whose only capacity was for taking punishment. It almost didn't get financed because one MGM executive thought La Motta was "a cockroach".

How could anyone question how Scorsese would handle a character like this? *Raging Bull* is the third film in a trilogy, along with *Mean Streets* and *Taxi Driver*, in each of which Scorsese presents an alienated misfit protagonist who can only express his rage and frustration through violence. In *Mean Streets* Johnny Boy puts a bomb in a mailbox and fires a gun from a roof. In *Taxi Driver*, Travis transforms himself into an armed terrorist. In *Raging Bull*, Jake La Motta fights everyone, in and out of the boxing ring. All three characters are suicidal, an intent which reveals itself physically – in Johnny Boy's eccentric movements, in Travis' paramilitary preparations and most astonishingly in Jake La Motta's obesity.

When I first saw the film, I was completely fascinated by Robert De Niro's gaining more than 100 lbs for his role. I'd never seen anything like it. De Niro had stepped beyond illusion. His breathing became short, his thighs rubbed together, his huge belly hung over his pants. He became a different person. Scorsese says his decision just to frame the film with the older La Motta (instead of using flashbacks throughout) was because the "thin guy and the fat guy" seemed to be two different characters. I was fascinated with this fat guy for a personal reason. I grew up with an obese father and the domestic violence in *Raging Bull* could have been from my life. I remember arguments where he dumped a full salad bowl over my mother's head, or kicked his way through doors. But our family life was catalogued by colour home movies filled with smiling faces, just like the home movies in *Raging Bull*.

Through La Motta, I began to understand my father (a stockbroker). Both men were guilty and ambivalent about sex. Their insecure masculinity led them to wall themselves in with fat as a desexualised protection against their own violence. My father had a doctorate in economics, yet he was totally inarticulate about his emotions. Outside the boxing ring, Scorsese's young Jake is similarly inarticulate, driven by powerful emotions that he can only express



Confessing in the ring: Robert De Niro in 'Raging Bull'

through spontaneous explosions of violence. A demand for dinner from his first wife quickly escalates; Jake flings the food over the kitchen table and storms out. His frustration at being cursed with small hands (welterweight size), a fact which makes him ineligible to fight the great heavyweight Joe Louis, causes a fist fight with his brother. After he marries his second wife Vicky, every jealous thought leads to a slap or a beating.

In the ring, however, Jake is a poet of feelings he can't explore elsewhere. He's a good Catholic boy who avoids the ultimate form of religious expression – confession – but who "confesses" in the ring instead. Only there can this man, who finds it impossible to apologise or make amends to the people he hurts, expiate his guilt. He explains to his trainer that his first defeat by Sugar Ray Robinson was punishment for bad things he'd done in his life. Jake's pleasure in being punched is redemptive, but it's also a form of sexual masochism. He goes beyond the old boxing tradition in which athletes avoid depleting themselves through sex before competition. He prefers consumption through blood. He needs release in the ring, since he feels unworthy of attaining it with the blonde goddess he's won.

Traversing between Jake's frustrated emotions outside the ring and their

operatic expression inside, the film explores Jake's violence from the perspective of those on the receiving end. We are in the bathroom with Vicki when Jake kicks in the door, and with his brother Joey when Jake storms into his kitchen and beats him up. During the boxing matches, however, Scorsese puts the camera inside the ring subjectively with Jake, making us identify with the loneliness, the triumph, the horror and the eloquence of this kind of violence.

Jake loses his title. His self-destructiveness triumphs. He spirals down to the lower depths: sleeping with under-age girls, gaining weight, ending up in jail banging his head against the wall crying "I am not an animal". For the first time outside the ring, Jake articulates his problem and transcends it. His rendition of the famous "I coulda been a contender" speech from *On the Waterfront* is delivered flatly, but it articulates all his sorrow and shame. It's borrowed speech, but it's entirely expressive, entirely personalised, and he is entirely redeemed by it.

In 1982, two years after *Raging Bull* was released, my father lost all his money in the stock market and jumped out of a window. I don't know if he ever saw the film.

The widescreen version of 'Raging Bull' is available on MGM/UA video

Identification of a Woman (Identificazione di una donna)

Director Michelangelo Antonioni; Italy/France 1982; Connoisseur Video CR 133; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15
 Antonioni returns to familiar territory in this examination of the ideological space between the sexes. Middle-aged film director Niccolò receives threats regarding his relationship with society woman Mavi. Without warning, Mavi runs off, leaving Niccolò to fondly gaze at his navel and fall in love with an actress. There are quintessential Antonioni moments – such as a night time scene in fog symbolising Niccolò's quest to find his artistic muse – but for the most part, this is a minor work. (MFB No. 590)

Making Up (Abgeschminkt)

Director Katja von Garnier; Germany 1992; Electric Pictures E-064; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15
 The German sense of humour is baffling, as demonstrated by this unremarkable comedy about two women looking for love and finding it in the least obvious place. Cartoonist Frenzy cures her artistic block after making up the numbers on a double date and also discovers that a night out with a harmless jerk is more satisfying than a one night stand with a jock (which is what happens to her best friend Maischa). Similarly mundane and half-cooked sexual politics are on show in the accompanying short, *The Most Beautiful Breasts in the World* (directed by Rainer Kaufman) in which a male chauvinist discovers what it is like to have large breasts after the pair he ogles in a lift are magically transferred to his own body. (S&S December 1994)

Malice

Director Harold Becker; USA 1993; PolyGram 6336443; Price £12.99; Certificate 15 (S&S February 1994)

Miracle in Milan (Miracolo a Milano)

Director Vittorio De Sica; Italy 1950; Art House AHC 7006; Price £15.99; Subtitles; B/W; Certificate U
 De Sica and co-scriptwriter Cesare Zavattini followed the success of *Bicycle Thieves* with this neo-realist fairy tale, which seems like a hopeless optimist's solution to the problems of Italy's post-war poverty. The tale about Toto, (Branduani Gianni), a benevolent orphan boy who organises a settlement of beggars into a happy, alternative community, mixes whimsy, Messianic fable and social comment. Toto sees off a wealthy landowner with the help of a magic dove. The dream-like sequences are a precursor to Fellini's fantastic style of film-making. (MFB No. 227)

Le Parfum d'Yvonne

Director Patrice Leconte; France 1994; Artificial Eye ART 102; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 18
 This story of sexual infatuation resembles a re-make of *Hotel du Lac*, and is Leconte's weakest work to date. Residing by the shores of Lake Geneva in a hotel for pensioners, a deserter from the Algerian war falls for the charms of beautiful actress Yvonne and her flamboyant homosexual companion. The director's fascination for love and death is again evident, while the gaps in the plot and lack of motivation recall the similarly disappointing *Tango*. (S&S September 1994)

Quentin Tarantino doesn't just make films – he makes cult movies designed for repeated viewing and frequent regurgitation by fans who love to quote their favourite scenes. According to Tarantino, long before actor Bruce Willis signed up for *Pulp Fiction*, he and his brothers would spend afternoons at home "riffing on scenes from *Dogs*" like old buddies enjoying a communal singalong. It's hardly surprising since Tarantino treats his own favourite scenes and speeches like well-loved songs. Take the soundtrack albums for *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction* (both MCA), the compilation of which Tarantino personally oversaw. Nestled amid the eclectic spray of classic pop tunes and rediscovered rarities (admit it, who had actually heard of The George Baker Selection before the *Dogs* album?) are tracks listed as 'Madonna Speech', 'Let's Get a Taco', 'Pumpkin and Honey Bunny' and the legendary 'Royale With Cheese'. These are not tunes (although judging by their suitability for drunken rendition they might as well be) but speeches, the intimate knowledge of which is crucial to the fans' appreciation of the movies. Just as Tarantino's song choices often feature in his original scripts (in Faber's recently published *Dogs* screenplay, the writer specifically states that the infamous ear-slicing sequence must be played to 'Stuck In the Middle With You'), so his dialogue becomes part of the film's musical score, both on screen and on record. When considering why Tarantino's first two features have passed so swiftly into common parlance, suddenly achieving the kind of cult quotability that normally takes years of late night screenings, the role of these soundtrack albums is not to be underestimated. Indeed, in the case of *Pulp Fiction*, it seems likely that a large proportion of Tarantino fans would have known whole speeches *before* they even saw the film, thanks to the high-profile release of MCA's soundtrack album.

This is certainly the case with *Natural Born Killers*, which has achieved cult quotability status despite being outlawed until recently both on video and film by the controversy-shy BBFC. Although Tarantino had his original screenplay credit demoted to an 'original story' credit in order to distance himself from Stone's overblown magnum opus, his influence remains most apparent in the format of the best-selling soundtrack album, which blends words, music, and sound-effects from the film in a seamless barrage of mediaphile noise. Painstakingly compiled by Trent Reznor (creator of Nine Inch Nails), *Music From and Inspired by Natural Born Killers* (Nothing/Interscope) offers everything from Juliette Lewis' complete "I see Angels, Mickey" speech to her casual remarks to an ill-fated suitor ("That's the worst fucking head I ever got in my life!") to be loved, lingered over and learned by an audience for whom the film itself was still forbidden.

The use of dialogue on soundtrack albums is not new. The score of Olivier's 1944 *Henry V* was augmented with key speeches from the movie, while the oft-quoted 'rarest soundtrack album' ever, *The Caine Mutiny* (1954), was hastily



Segue shuffle: 'Reservoir Dogs'

withdrawn due to legal wrangles over its use of dialogue. While speech featured in such early offerings, it soon lost its vogue appeal, becoming more of a novelty than a regular feature of soundtracks. Since Tarantino's recent rediscovery of the pleasures of dialogue tracks, however, others have been quick to follow suit, lending coherence to otherwise shambolic pop compilation soundtracks. So few of the songs on the *Four Weddings and a Funeral* album (Vertigo) actually feature in the film, it's unsurprising that the soundtrack relies on copious dialogue inserts to cement together its constituent parts.

Of all the Tarantino-related audio product on offer the least inspiring is Morgan Creek's recently deleted *True Romance* soundtrack which – despite the abundance of quotable scenes in the film – is entirely dialogue-free. Instead, it is left to Hans Zimmers' recurrent atmospheric theme to tie together the otherwise disparate pop songs (from Charlie Sexton's 'Graceland' to Chris Isaak's 'Two Hearts'), but the overall picture remains significantly lacking in homogenous charm. What would scriptwriter Tarantino have made of the album had he overseen the project? Compare this with long-time Tarantino-collaborator Roger Avary's *Killing Zoe*, on which Tarantino takes an executive producer credit. Like *True Romance*, the *Killing Zoe* soundtrack album features no dialogue. Yet significantly *Killing Zoe* remains unique in the Tarantino cannon as the only movie bearing his name (the publicity boasts "From the Creators of *Pulp Fiction* and *True Romance*") which features not a pop jukebox soundtrack, but a coherent original incidental score. Created by technowizards tomandandy, *Killing Zoe* (Milan) offers nearly 50 minutes of grungy, strangely sinister synthesiser rumblings, augmented by pseudo-religious Arabic wails and threatening, hushed English voices. It's a great album, far more impressive than the film itself (as indeed is Reznor's *Music From... Natural Born Killers*), and an excellent example of the successful synthesis of a pop sensibility with the incidental score tradition. With such solidly coherent musical material, dialogue would be an unnecessary addition, perhaps even a distraction. For the pop compilation soundtrack album, at which Tarantino has proved himself the modern master, it is a saving grace.

Posse

Director Mario Van Peebles; USA 1993; Columbia TriStar CVR 31351; Price £15.99; Certificate 15 (S&S December 1993)

Prelude to a Kiss

Director Norman Rene; USA 1992; FoxVideo 1971; Price £10.99; Certificate PG (S&S Video June 1994)

The Purple Heart

Director Lewis Milestone; USA 1944; FoxVideo 1730S; Price £12.99; B/W; Certificate PG Based on a true story about a group of American servicemen who were put through a Japanese kangaroo court and beheaded for their alleged war crimes. A minor classic starring Dana Andrews and Richard Conte as the pilot leaders who bomb Tokyo. The expressionistic camera style and rousing plot fail to detract from the blatantly racist anti-Japanese message. (MFB No. 125)

Robin Hood: Men in Tights

Director Mel Brooks; USA 1993; Columbia TriStar CVR 30363; Price £12.99; Certificate PG (S&S January 1994)

The Saint of Fort Washington

Director Tim Hunter; USA 1993; FoxVideo 86425; Price £12.99; Certificate 15 (S&S June 1994)

Season of the Witch

Director George A. Romero; USA 1972; Redemption RED; Price £15.99; Certificate 18 Inside this exploitation thriller, there's a decent movie trying to get out, but unfortunately, the film's lapses into slasher genre divert from the well-presented ironic commentary on mid-American patriarchal society. A housewife's fears of growing old alone in her suburban house are brought to the surface by the actions of her aggressive husband and domination by the people around her. Dated and not always convincing, but there are moments that reveal why Romero regards this as one of his favourite early movies. Aka *Hungry Wives* / *Jack's Wife*. (MFB No. 587)

Stalingrad

Director Joseph Vilsmaier; Germany 1992; Entertainment in Video EVS 1149 (Widescreen 1150); Price £10.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15 (S&S May 1994)

A Wing and a Prayer

Director Henry Hathaway; USA 1944; FoxVideo 1910S; Price £12.99; B/W; Certificate PG A superb all-male cast (Don Ameche, Dana Andrews, William Eythe, Charles Bickford, Cedric Hardwicke) carries this excellent propaganda movie set during the Second World War in the South Pacific, which combines wartime footage with studio set-pieces. (MFB No. 130)

Winter of Our Dreams

Director John Duigan; Australia 1981; Art House AHP 5011; Price £12.99; Certificate 15 An exposé of the corruption rife in Australian big cities during the early 80s. Bryan Brown plays a conniving journalist who exploits the prostitute friend of a deceased old flame. (MFB No. 578)

Working Girls

Director Lizzie Borden; USA 1986; Connoisseur Video CR 132; Price £15.99; Certificate 15 Welcome video re-release for Borden's finest work. A relentless look at life in a

New York brothel through the eyes of a Yale graduate and aspiring photographer (Louise Smith) who lives with her female lover. The sleazy sleeve is misleading, as the sex scenes are as erotic as a pair of old socks. Compelling, thought-provoking and touching. (MFB No. 651)

Retail premiere

A Better Tomorrow

Director John Woo; Hong Kong 1987; MIA V3422; Price £12.99; 95 minutes; Certificate 18; Producer Tsui Hark; Screenplay John Woo; Lead Actors Chow Yun Fat, Ti Lung, Leslie Cheung, Emily Chu, Lee Chi Hung Woo's familiar blend of melodrama and tightly-choreographed violence is seen here in embryonic form. This story of two brothers – one a cop, the other a money counterfeiter with a long-standing score to settle – looks assured in the set-pieces but a little ragged during the domestic scenes. Poor dubbing and an ill-suited soundtrack lets the side down, but Woo's skill in directing action sequences shows.

Chain of Command

Director David Worth; USA/Israel 1993; Cannon S032116; Price £10.99; 91 minutes; Certificate 18; Producers Allan Greenblatt, Asher Gat; Screenplay Christopher Applegate, Ben Johnson Handy; Lead Actors Michael Dudikoff, Todd Curtis, Keren Tishman, R. Lee Ermye A contractual obligation project, starring Dudikoff as an out-of-character bad-mouthing secret agent who attempts to undermine a terrorist organisation in a fictitious Middle Eastern country. As in *The Human Shield*, another Dudikoff vehicle, the events are based on the Gulf war with a strong Israeli bias.

Lesbian Leather Shorts

Directors Various; Dangerous To Know DTK 010; Price £15.99; 99 minutes; Certificate 18 Following in the footsteps of *Lesbian Lycra Shorts*, this diverse and more erotic collection of short films delights and infuriates. Len Keller's *Ifé*, Annette Kennerley's *Sex, Lies, Religion* and Susan Muska and Hrafnhildur Gunnarsdottir's *Stafford's Story* are brief, well-thought out works. Julie Jenks' heterosexual porno pastiche *The Housewife and the Plumber* is little more than cheap titillation, but the collection begins to look up with Cathy C. Cook's *The Match That Started My Fire* – a sexy mock radio show impressively laid over a collage of archive and nature film footage mixed with black and white camcorder images. New Zealand director Christine Parker's *Peach* is a standard girl meets girl love story. The compilation wraps up with *Jumping the Gun* by Jane Schneider – a tight, whimsical short about the morning after; a documentary about body piercing called *Tender* by Sara Whiteley and Raven Tender Barbarian; and Mark Harriot's *Queer Photographer*, a tribute to Tessa Boffin who died last year.

Scandalous Gilda (Scandalosa Gilda)

Director Gabriele Lavia; Italy 1985; Jezebel JEZ ; Price £15.99; 85 minutes; Certificate 18; Producer Pietro Innocenzi; Screenplay Gabriele Lavia; Lead Actors Monica Guerritore, Gabriele Lavia, Pina Cri, Jasmine Maimonte Dull erotic thriller in which a jilted wife seeks out a man to humiliate in revenge for her husband's infidelity.

Sight and Sound

Back copies of Sight and Sound are available priced: UK £3.20; Overseas £4.20 (including postage and packing)

To order contact:
Sight and Sound
Back Issues
Tower House
Sovereign Park
Market
Harborough
Leicestershire
LE16 9EF
Telephone:
0858 468888

FILM PRODUCTION COURSE

Learn by shooting a film under the supervision of top professionals at London's major production centre.

Prominent Studios is the only feature film production centre where training is available.

The "Future in Films" course comprises of intense, practical evening and weekend sessions. You will learn the essential aspects of film making by writing and shooting your own production with other students.

PANICO WORKSHOP

On successful completion of the course, you may join the "Panico" Workshop. This will give you access to the equipment, facilities and advice, enabling you, together with other students, to make your own productions.

Course Unit, Prominent Studios,
68a Delancy St, London NW1 7RY.
Tel: 071 284 1163

Channel

— VIDEO FILMS —

MAIL ORDER

WE CAN SUPPLY ALL NEW RELEASES AND VIDEO FILMS REVIEWED IN SIGHT AND SOUND

Blood Wedding - Carlos Saura	15.99	Short Film about Killing -		Fellini - Roma	14.99
Europa Europa	15.99	Kieslowski film	15.99	Les Visiteurs	15.99
Olympiad - Leni Riefenstahl		Identification of a Woman -		Man Bites Dog	15.99
(2 Tapes)	24.99	Antonioni	15.99	Golden Balls (widescreen)	15.99
Madame Bovary - Claude Chabrol	15.99	Season of the Witch - Redemption	12.99	Carmen - Carlos Saura (widescreen)	15.99
Hard Boiled 2 - The Lost Blood	13.99	The Monastery of Sandomir		L'Ecclisse	15.99
Faust - Jan Svankmajer	12.99	(1919 black and white)	12.99	Ma Saison Preferee	15.99
City of Women - Federico Fellini	15.99	Story of a Cloistered Nun -		Bicycle Thieves	15.99
El Mariachi	12.99	Redemption	12.99	Like Water For Chocolate	15.99
Cousin Cousine	15.99	Cats Victim - Redemption		How To Be A Woman And Not	
Les Diaboliques -		Scandalous Gilda	12.99	Die In The Attempt	15.99
Clouzot's Classic Thriller	15.99	Erotic Dreams of Cleopatra		Go Fish	15.99
The Tall Blonde Man with		(widescreen)	12.99	Stalingrad (widescreen/dubbed)	14.99
One Black Shoe	15.99	Le Ci du Himou		Equinox - Mathew Modine	15.99
Un Femme ou Deux -		(widescreen/30 January)	15.99	Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence	12.99
Gerard Depardieu	15.99	Lancelot du Lac (13 February)	15.99	The Saint Of Fort Washington	12.99
Le Parfum d'Yvonne (widescreen)	15.99	Holy Virgin vs the Evil Dead	12.99	Winter Of Our Dreams -	
The Puppetmaster	15.99	Spooky Encounters (widescreen)		Bryan Brown	12.99
Pelle the Conqueror	10.99	Hong Kong Chiller	13.99	Posse	10.99
A Better Tomorrow - John Woo	12.99	Wild Strawberries (widescreen/		Boiling Point - Wesley Snipes	10.99
A Better Tomorrow - John Woo		box set with screenplay)	15.99	Dangerous Touch -	
** (box set) **	19.99	Kika - Almodovar	15.99	Lou Diamond Phillips	10.99
Making Up/Most Beautiful		Three Colours Blue	15.99	Fallen Angels Parts 1 & 2	EACH 10.99
Breasts in the World	15.99	Three Colours White	15.99	Legacy Of Rage	10.99
Miracle in Milan	15.99	Germinal - Gerard Depardieu	15.99	Wherever You Are - Julian Sands	10.99
Short Film about Love -		Farewell My Concubine	15.99	Rising Sun	13.99
Kieslowski film	15.99	Fellini - Satyricon	14.99		

For more information on other titles, please contact Channel Video Films, 58 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6ND
Telephone 0171 372 2025 Internet Address Channelent@Delphi.Com

POST & PACKING U.K.: £2 - 1 Tape (50p each additional tape) Europe: £6.50 up to 3 tapes (£2 each additional tape) Outside Europe: £12 up to 3 tapes (£3 each additional tape) All orders recorded delivery.
Film availability and prices subject to change without notice. Please allow 14 days for delivery.
Comprehensive video catalogue: UK £2. Rest of the world £3 - over 17,000 titles. All prices include VAT.

CREDIT CARD ORDER LINES

TEL. OR FAX: 0171-372 2025 FAX: 0171-372 2072

Office hours:
Mon-Fri
10am-6pm

Index

The Sight and Sound annual index for Volume 4 (January 1994 - December 1994) is now available

Sight and Sound

The 16-page index includes the following sections:

- a comprehensive general subject index
- film reviews by title and director
- book reviews by title and author
- video reviews
- contributors

Subscribers will receive their index free with the February 1995 issue

The indexes for volumes 1-4 may be purchased from:

Sight and Sound Sales, Tower House
Sovereign Park, Market Harborough
Leicestershire, LE16 9EF, Telephone 0858 468888

Prices

- UK, Europe: £3.00 each including p&p
- Overseas: £4.50 each including p&p

Vancouver Film School

If you seek intensive hands-on industry based training in the motion picture arts, we offer 4 of the best foundation programs in North America:

- ★ Film Production Techniques
- ★ Digital Post-production
- ★ High-end 3D Computer Animation
- ★ Classical Animation



For detailed information call:

1-800-661-4101

or write: #400 - 1168 Hamilton Street,
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6B 2S2

Letters

Letters are welcome, and should be addressed to the Editor at Sight and Sound, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL. Facsimile 071 436 2327

Scary covers

From Jacqueline McLaurin

Very busy times right now, but I had to stop ironing, writing Christmas cards, cooking etc., to tell you I had enough of scary, bloody, violent, grotesque *Sight and Sound* covers over the last year. I do enjoy the magazine, but my children hate to see it laying around and wonder what this 'orrible magazine is that their parents are reading, just judging by the cover. I don't have time to develop the argument, but I am sure you see my point and my outburst provoked just now by reaching (late at night) for a nice cheese bite and the latest issue of *S&S*, putting my feet up – and going "Yuugh" at Tom Cruise's bloody teeth. And please don't think "Silly woman, read *Hello* instead!" or go on about reflecting the real face of today's cinema! You have the choice – or is it Esterson Lackersteen? At any rate, could you possibly tone it down, please? Thank you in advance for looking into it.

Newbury, Berkshire

Starring Lena Horne

From Stephen Bourne

In his review of *That's Entertainment! III* (*S&S* January) Andy Medhurst says that MGM denied Lena Horne the role of Julie LaVerne in *Show Boat* (1951) because of racism. However, the situation is more complicated than that. The role of Julie was never intended for Horne. From the start, MGM had planned to cast Judy Garland, their number one musical star, but she had just been replaced on both *Annie Get Your Gun* and *Royal Wedding*, and MGM had terminated her contract before work began on *Show Boat*.

Arthur Freed's explanation for not replacing Garland with Horne was simple: "You couldn't pass Lena off as white. The girl that played the part had to look white." When I interviewed John Kobal in 1983 he said he agreed with Freed's decision to cast Ava Gardner: "Lena was black, which Julie isn't... And at least Lena worked a lot. It is because of those MGM films that we know her. Without Freed she wouldn't have been at MGM at all. Later in her life, directors like her son-in-law Sidney Lumet didn't find parts for her, so he either didn't think her career a waste, or he wasn't interested in redressing a wrong." Four years later, Lena's daughter Gail Lumet Buckley told me: "I just think it was a racist situation. In 1951 MGM couldn't sell a film with Lena in the South unless they cut her out. This couldn't be done with a film like *Show Boat*, in which she would have been integrated with white cast members. But MGM was the least racist studio in Hollywood. They didn't hesitate to put her under contract."

Medhurst also says that MGM confined Lena to "minor" roles. But let us not forget that when she made these brief 'guest' appearances she was always beautifully gowned, and given classy songs to perform in striking sets. Seeing three or four minutes of Lena Horne in an MGM musical of the 1940s is more exciting and satisfying than watching an entire feature from 1990s starring the likes of Macauley Culkin, Eddie

Murphy or Sylvester Stallone. Finally, I believe that it's Lena Horne singing Jerome Kern's and Dorothy Field's *A Fine Romance* on the soundtrack of *The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, not – as claimed in your review in November 1994 – Ella Fitzgerald. London

Marketing the classics

From Martin McCabe, Marketing & Acquisitions Director, Tartan Video

In reply to Messrs Brownlow and Gill (*S&S* December) I regret that they feel that our video release of *Sunrise* is "deplorable" and an "insult". It has never been Tartan Video's intention to release anything of a standard nature. The element we used for the release took us more than a year to secure, and was finally accepted after a good number of prints had been rejected. The print was cleaned and digitally remastered at considerable expense, from the best materials we had made available to us at the time. If we had been aware of the existence of a better element we would of course have used it.

As much as I can sympathise with the frustrations expressed in the letter one has to question the ongoing viability of such releases in a marketplace even as mature as the UK where the audience for silent classics (with one or two notable exceptions) can be measured in the low hundreds rather than the thousands. Our commitment to presenting a diverse range of world cinema to the public has to be tempered by the fiscal considerations imposed by such a limited market, and despite our personal enthusiasm for making these titles available to a wider audience we may be left in a situation where the only realistic alternative is not to issue them at all.

London

Pillars of myth

From Adrian Turner

May I be allowed, as the author of a recent book about the making of *Lawrence of Arabia*, to correct a few mistakes in Len Deighton's otherwise fine article? Understandably, he simplifies the numerous efforts made by film-makers to acquire the screen rights to *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, but unfortunately he omits the major contribution of Michael Wilson, whose treatment and screenplay was the main reason A. W. Lawrence ultimately sold the book to Sam Spiegel. Sadly, Deighton also perpetuates the myth that the casting of Alec Guinness as Feisal David was opposed by Lean (in fact, Lean personally invited Guinness to play the role). Deighton quotes Lean as saying that "Finney worked four days, then quit," though Finney only did a screen test. Deighton also claims that *Lawrence* was cut after the première to enable three shows a day. This is not the case at all – *Lawrence* was cut because Lean wanted to cut it. (And after the trim, 35 minutes-worth, there were still only two shows a day, as advertisements in the British and American press prove.)

London

Goethe revised

From M.F. Pride

In the January 1995 issue Mr Busy calls Goethe's *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* a "mammoth epistolary novel". A very small mammoth, I would have thought (180 pages in

my edition) and very few letters – two or three interpolated into a mainly third person narrative. As for the supposed lack of sex, I remember a description of the conception of a child who shall, by an effort of the father's will, bear the features of his absent beloved rather than those of the woman he's impregnating.

London

Additions and corrections

January 1995 p.24: In the picture caption, 1994 not 1995. p.52-53: In the last paragraph of the review of *Only the Strong*, Silverio not Silverado

The Chronicle of Cinema, 1895-1920

p.4 (Genesis of cinema) 1721: Willem Jakob's Gravesande's not Willem Jakob's Gravesande's. p.7 (Cinema births) 1874: Baggot not Baggott. 1886: Schünzel not Schüntzel. 1887: Walther Ruttmann not Walter. 1891: Prokofiev not Prokoviev. 1893: Pangborn not Pangborne. p.12 (1900 Births): Vasiliev not Vasiiev. p.13 (1901 World events): Dvorák not Dvo ák. p.16 (1904 World events): Dvorák not Dvo ák. p.17 (1905 Films, USA): *The Miller's Daughter* is directed by Porter and McCutcheon not Porter and McCutcheon. (1905 Births): Havelock-Allen not Havelock-Allen. p.24 (1912 Births): Jiri Trnka not Ji i. p.27 (1916 Films, Sweden): *Kärlek...* not *Kärlek....*. p.28 (1917 World events): Prokofiev not Prokoviev. p.30 (1919 Films, Germany): Schünzel not Schüntzel.

The Chronicle of Cinema, 1920-1940

p.39 (1926 Films, Germany): *Die Geschichte des Prinzen Achmed* was released under the title *Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed*. p.40 (1927 World events): *Show Boat* not *Showboat*. p.46 (1931 Films, Portugal): *Douro, faina fluvial* not *...fluvial*. Films, USA: *Dishonored* not *Dishonoured*. p.47 (1932 Films, USA): *Pack Up Your Troubles* is directed by George Marshall/Ray McCarey not Marshall George/McCarey Ray. p.52 (1936 World events): Fitzgerald, *The Crack-up* was published in 1945 as stated. Delete reference in 1936. (1936 Films, USA): *Rose-Marie* is directed by W. S. Van Dyke not Willard Van Dyke. p.55 (1939 Films, Germany): *Der ewige Jude* not *Die ewige Jude*.

The Chronicle of Cinema, 1940-1960

p.62 (1944 top caption): an image from a scene which Wilder cut from *Double Indemnity* before release. p.67 (1948 World events): Lehár not Le ár. p.69 (John Ford and the Western) *Wagon Master* not *Wagonmaster*. p.71 (1950 Deaths): Sjöberg died in 1980 not 1950. p.75 (1955 Films, USA): *Blackboard Jungle* not *The Blackboard Jungle*; *The Night of the Hunter*, not *Night of the Hunter*.

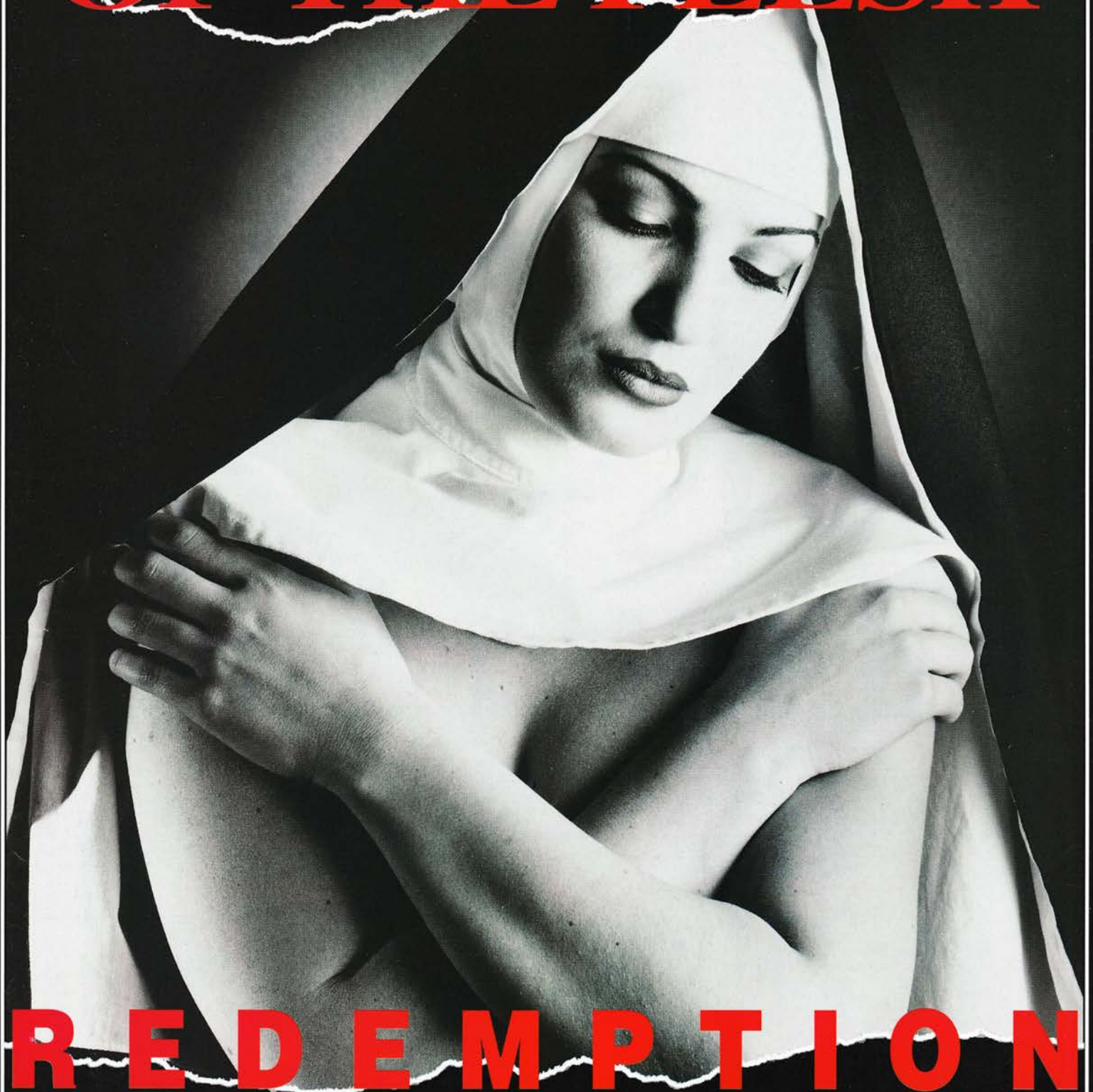
The Chronicle of Cinema, 1960-1980

p.82 (1960 Films, USA): *BUTterfield 8* not *BUTterfield 8*. p.89 (Hard-core porn) stag films not 16mm stag films. p.89 (Rock movies) *Blackboard Jungle* not *The Blackboard Jungle*. p.90 (1968 Films, Argentina): *The Hour of the Furnaces* is directed by Fernando Solanas and not by Solanas and Getino. p.91 (1969 World events): Penderecki not Penderrecky. p.100 (1975 Films, USA): *French Connection II* not *The French Connection*.

The Chronicle of Cinema, 1980-1995

p.122 (1992 Deaths) Vilma Banky died 18 March 1991 as stated. Delete reference in 1992. p.124 (1994 Films, USA): *Clear and Present Danger* is directed by Phillip Noyce not Philip Noyce; *Pret-a-Porter* released in the US as *Ready to Wear*.

CONFESSIONS OF THE FLESH



REDEMPTION

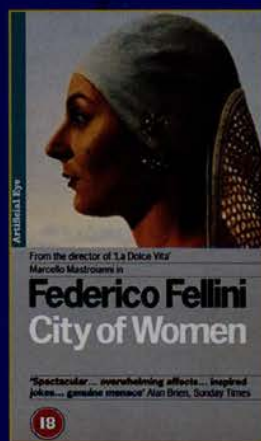
TOTAL VIDEO ABSOLUTION

THIS SEASONS SAUCY RELEASES INCLUDE SUCH PAPAL FAVOURITES AS **STORY OF A CLOISTERED NUN**, **THE NUNS OF SAINT ARCHANGEL**, **THE SINFUL NUNS OF ST VALENTINE**, **KILLER NUN**, **FLAVIA THE HERETIC** AND THE CELESTIAL SLEAZE DRENCHED CLASSIC **THE OTHER HELL**.

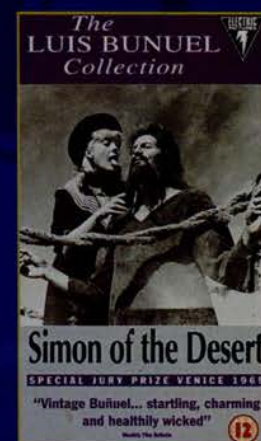
RELEASED THIS MARCH ARE CLIVE BARKER'S NEVER BEFORE SEEN EARLY SHORTS - SALOME AND THE FORBIDDEN

ALL OUR TAPES ARE AVAILABLE FROM HMV, VIRGIN RECORDS AND ALL GOOD VIDEO STOCKISTS.
For further information on REDEMPTION / JEZEBEL FILMS and the REDEEMER magazine please write to
THE REDEMPTION CENTRE, PO BOX 50, STROUD, GLOUCS., GL6 8YG.

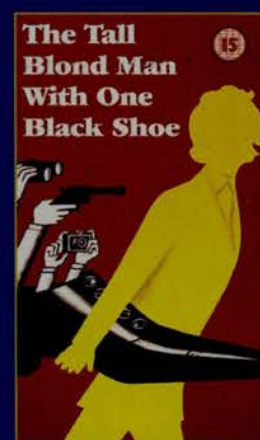
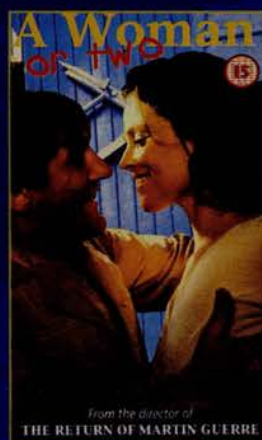
THE SWEET



SMELL



OF EXCESS



Available from HMV, Virgin Megastore, WHSmith, John Menzies, Blockbuster, Harrods, Tower Records and all good Video Stores
By mail order from Mail Order Galore 24 hour credit card hotline. Tel: 081 960 1860